Wednesday, December 5, 2007 ★★ 12 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 360 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

THE BELLS ARE RINGING: Soon a new set of carillon bells made in Holland will be heard again on the UP Diliman campus once they're installed in the restored Carillon Tower, a project of the UP Alumni Association. JOAN BONDOC

From The Pen to nat'l pen

DOJ chief: PNP can't force ABS to give raw video

By Dona Pazzibugan, Tarra V. Quismundo and Alcuin Papa

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE yesterday said it had the option of going to the courts to compel ABS-CBN to surrender the raw video footage of the Peninsula Manila hotel standoff. But the media giant has found an unlikely ally in Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

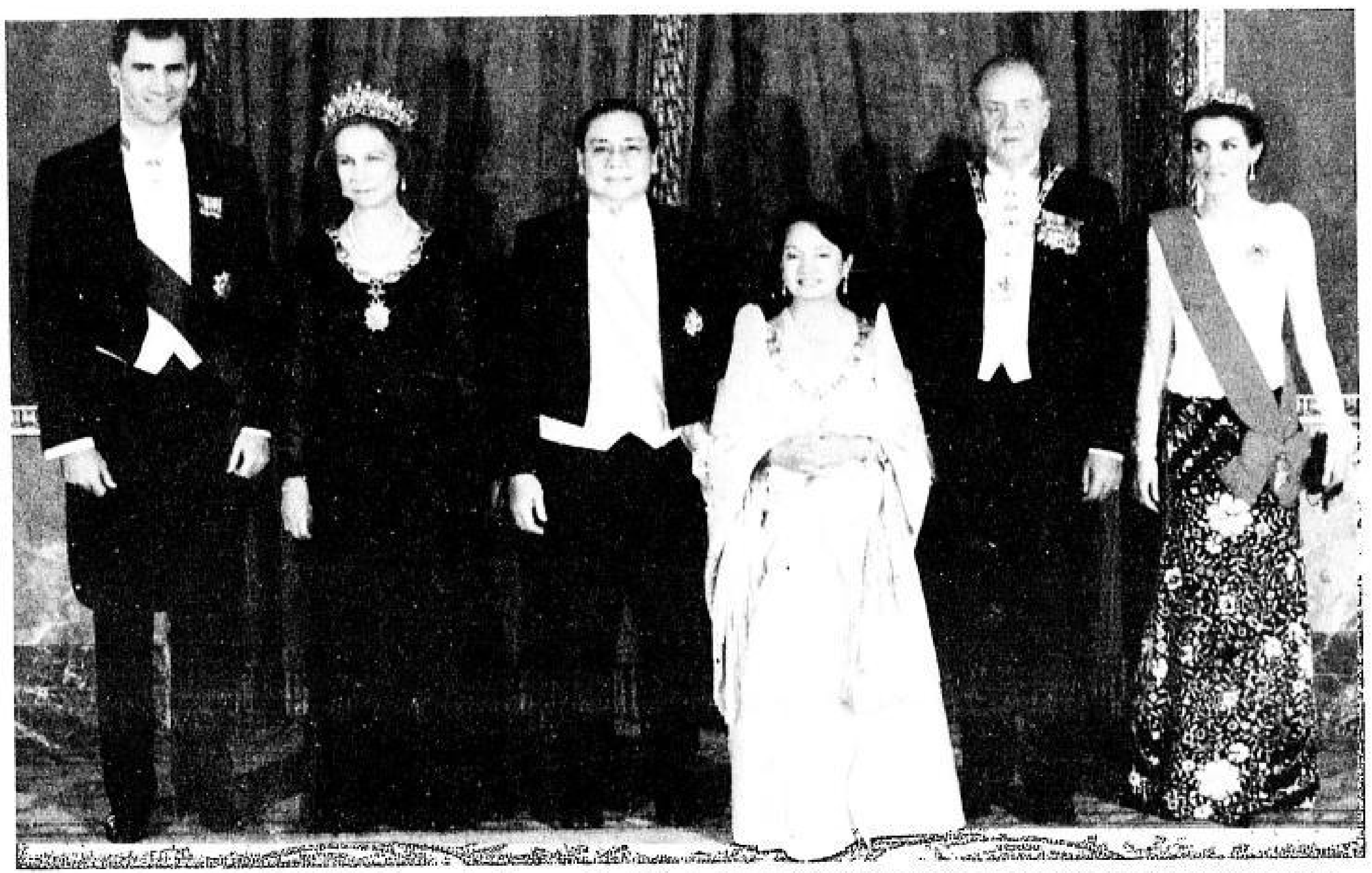
According to Gonzalez, the police cannot compel the network to turn over its videotapes of the Nov. 29 hotel standoff.

He said the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) "can only hope for cooperation" from ABS-CBN officials.

"ABS-CBN cannot be compelled to submit videos," Gonzalez told reporters on the sidelines of the Senate plenary budget hearings.

"But," he added, "if media do not co-

DOJ CHIEF/ A22



GRANDEUR AT THE PALACE: Before a gala dinner at the Palacio Real de Madrid in Spain on Monday, President Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, pose with the royals of Spain, from left, Crown Prince Felipe, Queen Sofia, King Carlos I and Princess Letizia. AP

Spain's king hail GMA, RP democracy

By Michael Lim Ubac

MADRID (VIA PLDT)—PILLORIED AT home over extrajudicial killings and allegations of police harassment of the media, President Macapagal-Arroyo received an accolade from King Juan Carlos I of Spain for the Philippines' role as a human rights defender with its abolition of the death penalty.

The Spanish king spoke at a gala dinner in honor of Ms Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, at the Palacio Real de Madrid (Royal Palace) on Monday.

He also credited the Philippines with "opening the way to democracy in Asia."

The king cited the Philippines for being at "the forefront of liberties and the defense of human rights with the abolition of the death penalty, a gesture which gave us satisfaction" and which

SPAIN'S/ A22

'Junket not fun' but 3 solons seek probe

By Christian V. Esguerra and Norman Bordadora

LEYTE REP. FERDINAND MARTIN ROmualdez, a neophyte congressman, yesterday said the lawmakers who joined President Macapagal-Arroyo on her trip to Spain and the United Kingdom were far from having a holiday.

"Just to give you an idea of the system here ... the President is shuttled very rapidly from one affair after the other. The congressmen are broken up in groups and leapfrog in alternate patterns," Romualdez said in a text message from Madrid.

Romualdez said he spent his own money for the trip.

Even as Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye defended the decision of at least 30 congressmen to join the European trip, three opposition lawmakers filed a resolution seeking an

JUNKET/ A11

Gov't cites security for transfer of Trillanes et al.

By Alcuin Papa

STATE PROSECUTORS ARE doing the paperwork for the transfer to the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP), the national penitentiary in Muntinlupa City, of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and 34 other soldiers and civilians charged with rebellion in connection with the Nov. 29 failed revolt at the Peninsula Manila.

At a press conference in Camp Crame yesterday, Interior Undersecretary Marius Corpus said state prosecutors would cite "security considerations" in asking the Makati Regional Trial Court to transfer the accused.

"We have studied the matter carefully and weighed the factors regarding

FROM THE PEN/ A22

Senate to investigate 'illegal' 5-hr curfew

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE SENATE HAS DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE the imposition of a five-hour curfew following the Peninsula Manila hotel standoff, condemning the police action as unconstitutional and warning against more serious violations of civil liberties if it is ignored.

In a bipartisan resolution approved on Monday night, the Senate said it

SENATE/ A21

'Climate refugees' seek help in Bali

BALI, INDONESIA—AS SCIENTISTS warn of rising seas from global warming, more and more reports of flooding from unprecedented high tides are coming in from villages like the one on Papua New Guinea's New Britain island. It's happening not only to low-lying atolls, but to shorelines from Alaska to India.

This week, by boat, bus and jetliner, a handful of villagers are converging on Bali to seek help from the more than 180 nations gathered at the United Nations' climate conference. The coastal dwellers' plight—once theoretical—appears all too real in 2007, and is spreading and worsening.

Scientists project that seas ex-

CLIMATE/ A12

After 1,700 km, farmers start Metro 'tour'

WALK THE TALK: 55 farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon, who arrived on foot yesterday in Metro Manila, camp outside the Senate to plead their case: That a 144-ha agricultural land be returned to them. They'll end their walk at the Palace on Dec. 7. ROGER MARGALLO

By Jerome Aning

HIGAONON FARMERS WHO EMbarked on a long march on Oct. 10 from the land they are claiming in Sumilao, Bukidnon, began their "tour" of Metro Manila yesterday to seek help from the government as well as cause-oriented groups.

Looking exhausted, the farmers—down to 55 from their original number of 6[illegible] passed through Baclaran in Parañaque City. They arrived in Metro Manila on Monday and have marched some 1,700 kilometers.

Members of militant groups met them at the Manila Film Center and escorted them to the Senate in Pasay City, where they were met by a number of senators.

The farmers' ultimate destination is the Department of Agrarian Reform central office in Quezon City, where they said they would camp out until their appeal to stop the land-use conversion of a 144-hectare property in Barangay San Vicente, Sumilao, had been resolved.

AFTER/ A12

WOW! PATIKIM NAMAN!

Pampanga folk cook biggest 'bringhe' ever

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—IT'S THE SUPER-sized version of the *bringhe,* the indigenized version of the Spanish paella.

On Monday, the provincial government of Pampanga, with the help of visual artist-chef Claude Tayag and 21 student chefs from the Angeles University Foundation (AUF), cooked what could be the biggest *bringhe* in the country.

"This [cooking of the largest *bringhe*] was the first here or elsewhere. Nobody has done this yet," Tayag said.

PAMPANGA/ A13

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern sections of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Mostly Cloudy	Cebu	Mostly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Mostly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Mostly Cloudy

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Marcos case goes to US high court

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES SUPREME Court on Monday stepped into a dispute over who owns money misappropriated by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, a case in which the US supports the government of the Philippines.

The Philippines claims ownership of the $35 million at issue and asked the US Supreme Court justices to take the case after two US lower courts awarded the stolen funds to 9,539 victims of the Marcos regime.

The lawsuit stems from an account set up with a $2 million deposit by a Marcos dummy corporation in 1972 at Merrill, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Inc. in New York. Merrill Lynch went to court in 2000 to determine who the money belonged to.

The Philippine government has asserted sovereign immunity and said the case could not proceed in US courts.

The willingness of lower US courts to nonetheless get involved "raises significant concerns," the US Solicitor General said in a filing with the Supreme Court.

The ruling by the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, which threw out a Philippine motion for review last year, prejudices cases in the Philippines on the same issue, said the US Solicitor General, whose office represents the US government in cases before the Supreme Court.

He said the involvement of the lower US courts also "threatens to undermine" the ability of the United States to assert sovereign immunity in foreign courts in similar circumstances or to enforce its judgments abroad.

The 9,539 people claiming grave human rights abuses obtained a $2 billion judgment against the Marcos estate in a US court in 1995. Judge Manuel Real of the Hawaii district court ruled that part of the amount is to be taken out of the $35 million Merrill Lynch account.

In September 2006 the US 9th District Circuit Court of Appeals threw out the Philippine government's motion to rehear the case on Real's initial award of $35 million to the rights victims.

The US Solicitor General said the US lower court rulings conflict with an understanding between the Philippines and Switzerland regarding the handling of the assets Marcos stole.

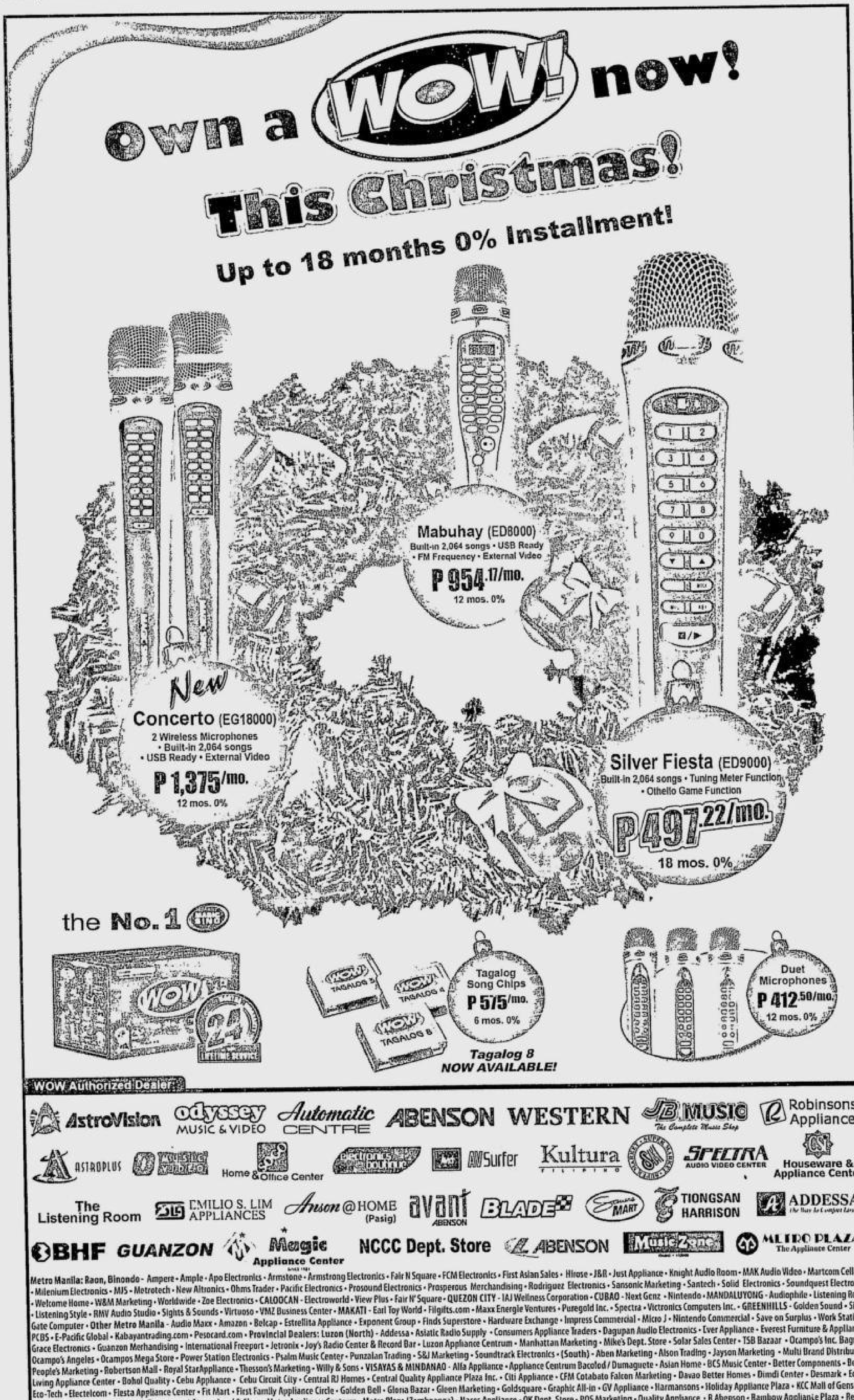
Switzerland, which filed papers with the US State Department in connection with the case, has returned to the Philippines $600 million stolen during the regime of Marcos.

Rulings by the lower US courts "seem to negate the Philippines' sovereign interests," the Swiss government told the US State Department.

Narciso Nario, a commissioner of the Presidential Commission on Good Government which is tasked with the recovery of Marcos ill-gotten assets, said the PCGG believes it has "a good chance of winning the case invoking our sovereign immunity as a state."

Nario said the US Supreme Court ruling would affect all Marcos ill-gotten wealth cases in foreign courts like Singapore, Switzerland and Lichtenstein as it will be used as a precedent "that we have a superior right over other claimants in the ill-gotten wealth cases."

The PCGG uncovered the $35-million Marcos deposits being held by Merrill Lynch under the account of the Arelma Foundation, a Panamanian-based dummy corporation set up by Marcos sometime in 1972. *AP with reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Jerry Esplanada*



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House panel junks ethics case vs JDV

By Christian V. Esguerra

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA has just gotten one monkey off his back.

The House committee on ethics yesterday crushed the ethics complaint filed against him by lawyer Roel Pulido over the congressional franchises granted to his son's company in the '90s.

The committee by a unanimous vote of 26-0 junked the complaint, saying it lacked jurisdiction over the issue, which lacked merit. Under the rules, it cannot act on matters that took place before the current Congress.

"The case against the honorable Jose de Venecia by Roberto Pulido is hereby dismissed for lack of jurisdiction," committee chair Rep. Eleandro Madrona announced some 15 minutes after the panel began deliberations on the complaint.

The committee needed only two meetings to drop the ax on Pulido. It had initially found his complaint to be valid "in form and content" and had asked De Venecia to reply.

Pulido, who was present at the meeting, looked dejected on hearing the decision. He was seated beside Raul Lambino, De Venecia's lawyer who prepared a lengthy reply to the allegation.

'Blind eye'

"The least they could have done was to hear me out," he said. "We could have at least argued (legalities) ... but they would rather turn a blind eye."

His complaint junked, Pulido still has a similar case against De Venecia pending with the Ombudsman.

In junking the complaint, the committee got the support of opposition Rep. Rufus Rodriguez who, along with Deputy Speaker Eric Singson, Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin and party-list Rep. Teddy Casiño, "seconded" the motion to dismiss put forth by Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan.

Locsin took a swipe at Pulido, noting that his recently dismissed impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo consisted of only three pages while his ethics complaint against De Venecia took all of 34 pages.

"This shows how serious the complainant was in going after the President and how serious he was in going after the Speaker," he said.

Lambino had filed a point-by-point reply to Pulido's charges "in order to shed light on the malicious accusations against him [De Venecia] and to set a precedent and guidance for everyone."

In the reply, De Venecia said his son, Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, was "neither an incorporator nor an officer" of Multi-Media Telephony when MTI applied for a legislative franchise and was granted one in 1993.

"This," he said, "belies the allegation that it was Joey de Venecia who founded MTI."

On the matter of his son's unsolicited proposal for the government's more recent National Broadband Network contract, De Venecia said his son had proposed that it be undertaken as a build-operate-transfer project that would not involve a government loan, expense, risk or guarantee.

Instead, the government went with a Chinese government loan to pay for the NBN project that was awarded to ZTE Corp. of China.

The hue and cry over alleged wrongdoing in the deal forced President Macapagal-Arroyo to cancel the project altogether.

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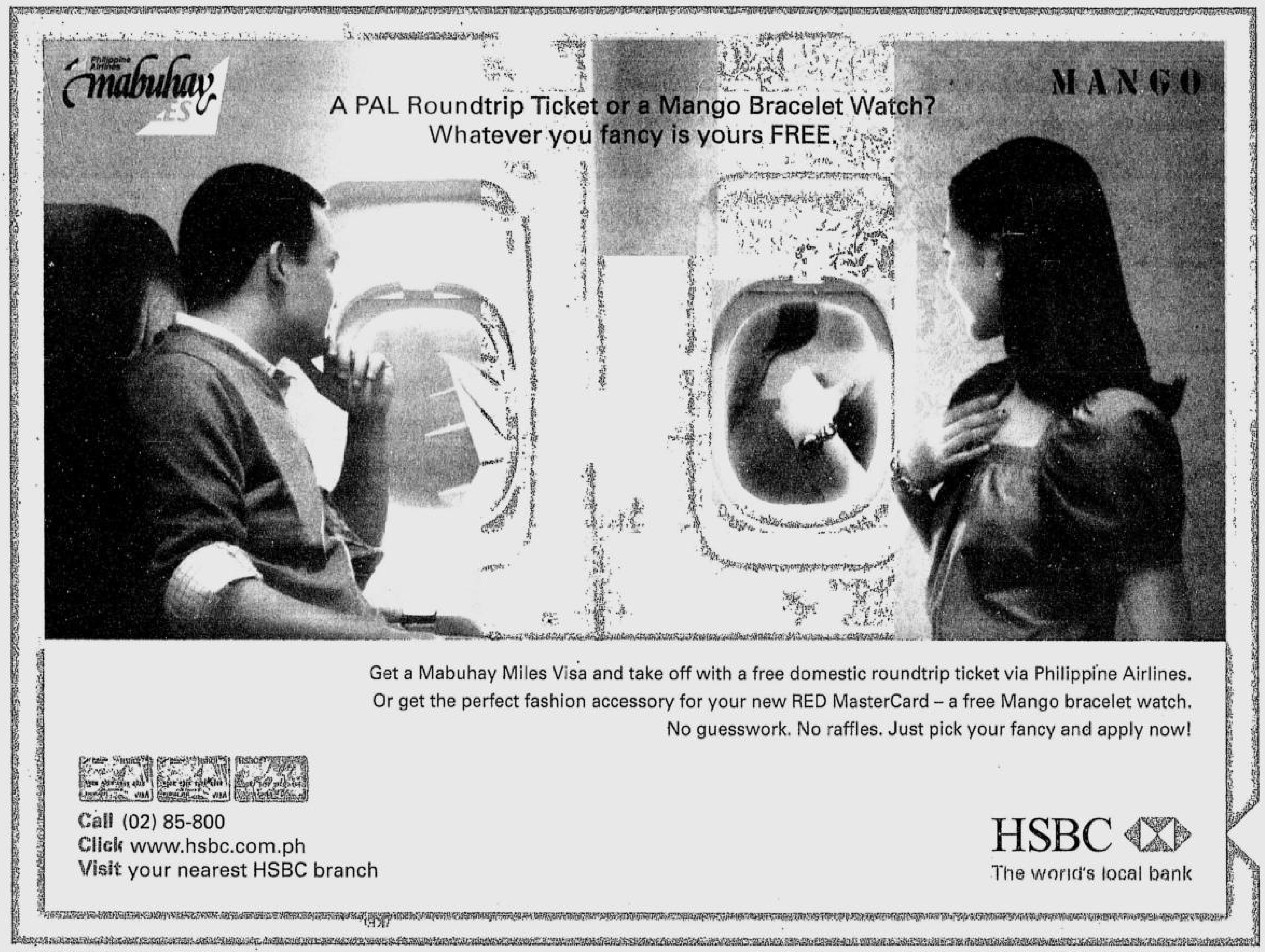

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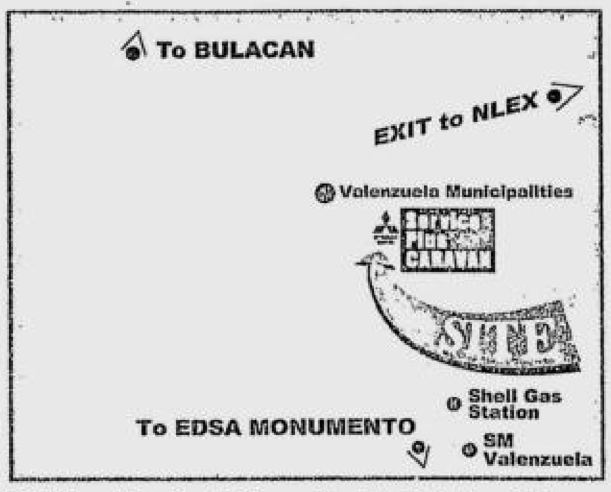

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Corrections

IN THE NOV. 26 ISSUE, a front-page analysis by Amando Doronila—"Program of change wins in Australia"—misstated the time when the recent Australian parliamentary elections ended. The polls ended at 6 p.m. in Australia, which is 3 p.m.—not 8 p.m.—in the Philippines.

* * *

IN THE NOV. 30 ISSUE, a front-page article—"Gov't imposes curfew in Metro Manila"—misstated the name of a militant group. The organization's name is Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomiya—not Kilusang Makabansang Ekonomista.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 1 ISSUE, a front-page article—"ABS-CBN plans to sue; PNP readies countersuit"—misstated the day when ABS-CBN issued a statement on the arrest of members of the media who covered the Peninsula Manila standoff. The statement was issued on Nov. 29 which was a Thursday—not Friday.

* * *

THE SAME ARTICLE misstated the position of Maria Ressa in ABS-CBN. Ressa is the senior vice president for news and current affairs—not head of the Current Affairs department.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a front-page commentary by Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.—"Trying to make sense out of it all"—misstated the rank and first name of one of the leaders of the Peninsula Manila siege. He is Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim—not Gen. Daniel Lim.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, an article on Page A7—"GMA off to Europe tonight"—misstated the surname of the secretary of agriculture. The agriculture secretary's name is Arthur Yap—not Defensor.

* * *

IN EARLIER EDITIONS of the same issue, a Page A15 caption misspelled the surname of a bishop. Bishop Emeritus Julio Labayen was released into the custody of Bishop Rolando Tirona—not Perona.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 2 ISSUE, the front-page banner story—"GMA offers P1M reward"—misstated the first name of the secretary of interior and local government. The interior secretary is Ronaldo—not Ricardo—Puno.

* * *

IN THE DEC. 3 ISSUE, the front-page banner story—"ABS-CBN role probed"—contained an erroneous sentence. The sentence should have read: "Razon said the police were still looking at the three groups he had mentioned last Friday—not last year—whose participation was outlined in documents authorities discovered in the hotel after the standoff."

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a front-page article—"Barias' wish: Boxing bout with Trillanes"—misstated the date of the Peninsula Manila standoff. The standoff happened on Nov. 29—not Nov. 20.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, December 5, 2007
1st Week of Advent

1st Reading: Is 25:6-10
Gospel: Matthew 15:29-37

Jesus went to the shore of Lake Galilee, and then went up into the hills where he sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the dumb, the blind, the lame, the crippled, and many with other infirmities. The people carried them to the feet of Jesus, and he healed them. All were astonished when they saw the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the crippled healed and the blind able to see; so they glorified the God of Israel.

Jesus called his disciples and said to them, "I am filled with compassion for these people; they have already followed me for three days and now have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away fasting, or they may faint on the way." His disciples said to him, "And where shall we find enough bread in this wilderness to feed such a crowd?" Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They answered, "Seven, and a few small fish."

So Jesus ordered the people to sit on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and the small fish and gave thanks to God. He broke them and gave them to his disciples, who distributed them to the people.

They all ate and were satisfied, and the leftover broken pieces filled seven wicker baskets.

Commentary

In this mountain (once Sinai, now the church in the world) God provides for all peoples' needs: food, drink, shelter, justice, hope, communion, and peace among nations. In God's dwelling there is joy and life, forgiveness and mercy unsurpassed. This is what we have been given and what we are to share with everyone. This is life—the life of God in Jesus—this is the good news. And Jesus, once the child born in a stable in poverty, now walks the earth, healing, touching those in pain, the outcast, and those lost to the world and others' love. God in Jesus is pity, compassion, and food that fills and nourishes. We are given the Word of God and the bread that sustains us—Eucharist. And there is enough, more than enough for us, and there are even leftovers to feed a world. What are we doing with all the leftovers, with the excess of word, bread, and mercy that our God gives us daily?

Akbar was easy target at Batasan

THE SUSPECTS IN THE BATASAN BLAST that killed five people, including Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar, have told police that they struck the House of Representatives because security there was lax compared to Akbar's homes in Basilan and Metro Manila.

Appearing for the first time before a House panel, Senior Supt. Asher Dolina, regional director of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) in Metro Manila, also formally identified former Deputy Speaker and Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin and incumbent Anak Mindanao Rep. Mujiv Hataman as the masterminds of the Nov. 13 blast, and revealed details of their investigations.

Hataman, however, yesterday delivered a privilege speech decrying his implication in the bombing. Salapuddin has also denied any involvement in the killing of Akbar.

"They (the suspects) told me that they could not get to (Akbar) in Basilan. They could not get to him at his residence because he has too many bodyguards," Dolina told the House committee on public order and security that heard the police findings on the bomb attack yesterday.

The suspects in police custody so far include Ikram Indama, Khaider Awnal and Adham Kusain.

"They said their target really was Congressman Akbar," Dolina said.

The suspects said they had prepared two motorcycle bombs to carry out their mission. One was supposed to have been used on Oct. 23 at the Sulo Hotel where the Basilan congressman was to meet somebody.

Dolina said that based on the confession of the arrested suspects, Salapuddin asked his former driver Ikram Indama to fetch Ridwan Indama from Tipo-tipo. Ridwan and another suspect were killed during a police raid in Payatas shortly after the House bombing.

Norman Bordadora

'Nicole' rape conviction marks 1st anniversary

THE GABRIELA MILITANT WOMEN'S group yesterday marked the first anniversary of the conviction of a United States soldier for rape by protesting his continued detention at the US Embassy.

Gabriela secretary-general Emmi de Jesus accused the Philippine and US governments of "colluding" to deny justice to the rape victim, known only as "Nicole," by allowing her convicted rapist, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, to serve out his prison term at the embassy.

"The US and Philippine governments robbed the Filipino people of any cause to celebrate what could have been a landmark victory against US military rape and abuse," De Jesus said in a statement.

About 100 Gabriela members tried to stage a rally in front of the Roxas Boulevard embassy but were driven out by police.

Smith was convicted in December 2006 and sentenced to life. However, 25 days later, agents from the Department of Interior and Local Government surreptitiously transferred him to the custody of the US Embassy following an agreement signed by Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney.

Jerome Aning and Jerry Esplanada

Nobel laureate to get honorary UP doctorate

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES WILL confer the degree of doctor of science, *honoris causa*, on Prof. David J. Gross, recipient of the 2004 Nobel Prize in physics, on Jan. 9.

After the conferment, Gross will deliver a lecture on the future of fundamental physics. The lecture is part of the Asean-wide "Bridges—Dialogues Towards a Culture of Peace" program of the International Peace Foundation.

UP is co-hosting the event as part of its Centennial Lecture Series.

The conferment ceremony will be held at the UP Film Institute in Diliman Quezon City, starting at 10 a.m.

Along with Dr. Hugh David Politzer and Dr. Frank Wilczek, Gross received the Nobel Prize for discovering asymptotic freedom in the theory of strong interaction—one of the four fundamental forces of nature.

Their discovery led to the establishment of quantum chromodynamics as the accurate theory of strong nuclear force.

Gross is the current director of the Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara and also holds the Frederic W. Gluck Chair in Theoretical Physics at the same university.

He earned his bachelor of science degree at the Hebrew University, where he majored in physics and mathematics, and took his graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley.

Gross is a fellow of the American Physical Society, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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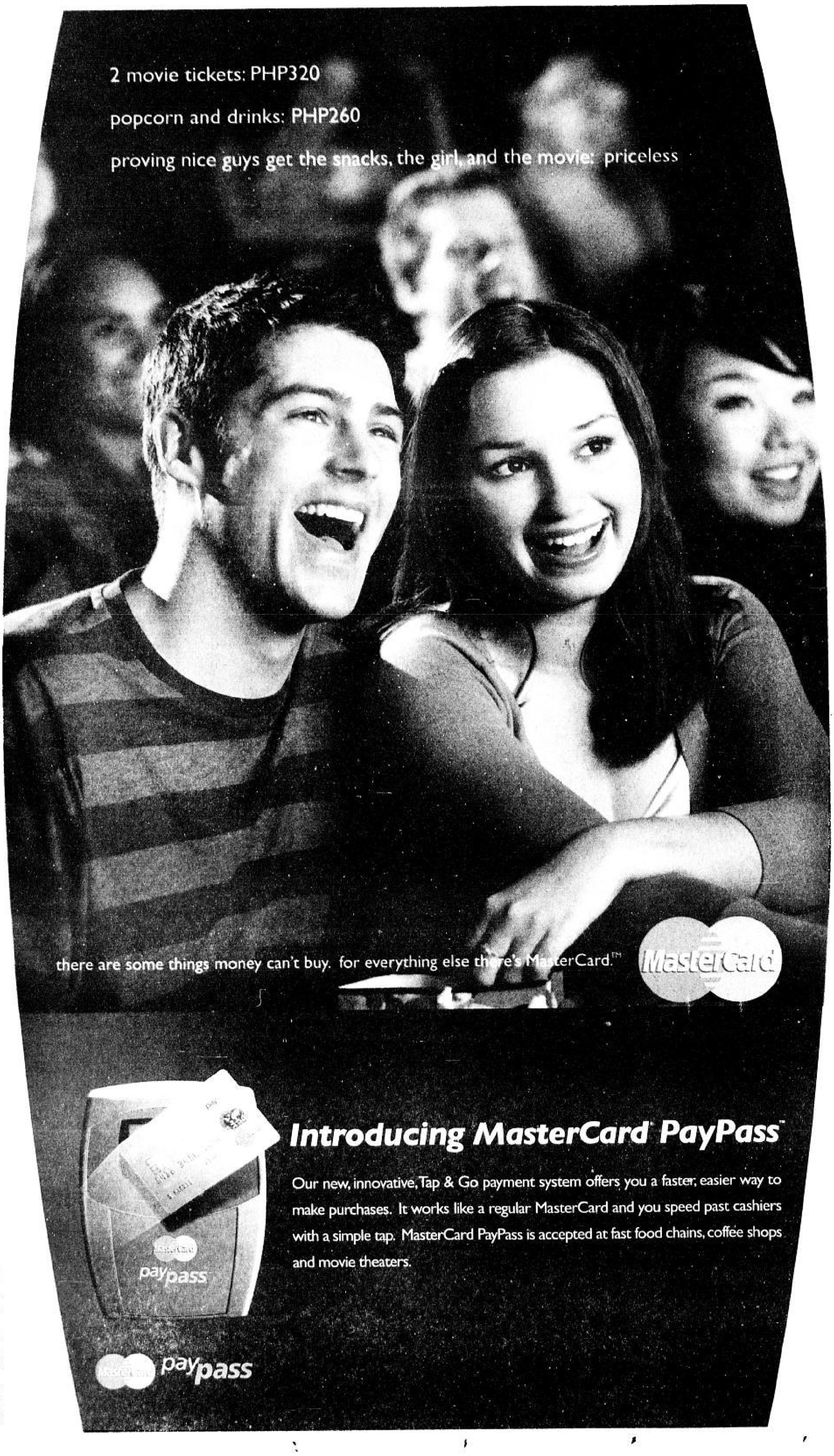
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RP-Spain treaty to benefit rapist; victims' kin cry foul

By Michael Lim Ubac and Jhunnex Napallacan, *Inquirer Visayas*

MADRID (VIA PLDT)—RAPE AND MURDER convict Francisco Juan "Paco" Larrañaga will be the first beneficiary of a prisoner exchange treaty between Spain and the Philippines, the Spanish government announced yesterday.

But Larrañaga won't be home for Christmas just yet.

The treaty's ratification came as a sweetener to President Macapagal-Arroyo's four-day state visit to Spain, which began Sunday, aimed at attracting more foreign investments to the Philippines in the areas of tourism, renewable energy, agriculture and fisheries, and at strengthening cultural, educational and diplomatic relations with Spain.

Larrañaga, a scion of the prominent Osmeña clan of Cebu, was convicted and sentenced to death in 2004 for the abduction, rape and murder of sisters Marijoy and Jacqueline Chiong in 1997. His sentence was commuted when Congress abolished capital punishment in 2006. He is serving out his life sentence in the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa.

The Chiong family has condemned the Treaty on the Exchange of Sentenced Persons, which seeks to return foreign prisoners to their country of nationality to serve out their sentences where they can be rehabilitated and integrated closer to their family and friends.

Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos told a press briefing here that once the treaty comes into effect, there would be no legal impediment for Larrañaga, who has dual Spanish and Filipino citizenship, to apply for transfer from a Philippine jail to a Spanish prison.

He said it would allow Larrañaga "to continue to carry through with his sentence" in Spain but stressed that the Spanish government was not trying to rush his transfer.

"We don't quite know when will this happen. But he will be able to come back to Spain," said Moratinos, speaking in Spanish.

Victims' protest

In Cebu City, Dionisio and Thelma Chiong, the parents of the slain sisters, believe they can stop the expected transfer of Larrañaga to a Spanish prison.

Thelma said she would write to Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno to question the legality of the treaty.

Thelma feels that the treaty was signed for the benefit of Larrañaga . "This is (to) single out Paco and this is an injustice and unfair to us," she said.

Thelma said she believed that the Senate ratified the treaty, which was sponsored by administration Sen. Miriam Santiago, before the President's visit so she can present it to Spanish officials.

Because of this, it would be useless to ask Ms Arroyo not to allow Larrañaga's transfer to Spain, she said.

Larrañaga's mother Margarita earlier welcomed the ratification of the treaty but said her son's lawyers would look at the provisions to see if her son can avail himself of the treaty.

Larrañaga, who has a pending petition for appeal of his conviction, has yet to make a plea for jail transfer under the treaty.

Sensitive issue

The president of the Spanish Senate, Francisco Rojo, who met President Macapagal-Arroyo in the Senate's Plaza de la Marina Española, thanked Ms Arroyo for the ratification of the prisoner exchange treaty.

Rojo said detention of Spanish citizens in the Philippines has always been a "sensitive issue," so "today we can congratulate ourselves" for the ratification of the treaty that the Spanish government has been seeking.

Speaking at the same press briefing, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo denied that Spain pressured the Philippines to ratify the treaty on account of Larrañaga.

Larrañaga was already convicted when the treaty was ratified by the Senate, he said, though he admitted that Spain had sought the treaty's approval.

GMA wants Spanish back in schools

By Michael Lim Ubac

MADRID (VIA PLDT)—HABLA ESPAÑOL?

Two decades after Spanish was dropped from the compulsory college curriculum, President Macapagal-Arroyo wants it put back.

Apparently buoyed by the warm welcome accorded to her by the Spanish monarchs, President Arroyo announced that she wanted the teaching of the Spanish language, or Español, resurrected in Philippine schools.

"I have recently signed a directive to our various government educational agencies to promote the teaching and learning of the Spanish language in the whole country," said the President, to the delight of her Spanish hosts.

Ms Arroyo is in Spain for a four-day state visit aimed at attracting more investments and further enhancing bilateral ties.

Ms Arroyo, however, may need a constitutional amendment to implement her plan.

Although it was the language of the First Philippine Republic, Spanish was dropped as an official language in the 1973 Philippine Constitution. This was reiterated in the 1987 Constitution, which listed only Filipino and English as the official languages for communication and instruction. Spanish was then abolished as a compulsory school subject in 1987 by then president Corazon Aquino.

Ms Arroyo, who speaks fluent Spanish, said she recognized the "historical and practical importance" of Español and lamented that "nowadays, young people no longer speak Spanish."

She said this in a speech late Monday before the Spanish Senate to stress that the Philippine-Spanish relationship "has left indelible marks in our culture, our religion, our customs and our language."

Spain ruled the Philippines for over 300 years.

Asked to elaborate on the plan, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, himself fluent in Spanish, said: "We will have to work together. They (Spanish officials) will be counterparts but the important thing is the training of teachers, new methodologies and exchange of scholars. The idea is to spread the learning and the teaching of the Spanish language."

Metro mornings getting colder

MORNINGS ARE GETTING COLDER. But weathermen say it's not much colder than it was last year.

"So far, the temperature is slightly near normal," said Edna Juanillo, chief of the climate information and prediction center of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

Residents of Metro Manila experienced the coldest day this year last Saturday, with the temperature dropping to 19.5 degrees Centigrade at the Pagasa Science Garden station in Quezon City.

The following days were less cold, with mercury slightly rising to 21.8 degrees C last Sunday, 22.8 degrees C Monday and 24.7 degrees C Tuesday.

But the temperatures were still close to the normal temperature of 21.3 degrees C, and hence, are considered "within the normal range," Juanillo said.

She said that December would be colder than November, but not colder than last year. "It's cold in the morning, but as the day progresses, it becomes warmer," she said.

The cool season is associated with the coming of the northeast monsoon, or *amihan*, a northeasterly wind that sweeps down from the plateaus of Asia and the Himalayas, and brings rain and cooler weather to Southeast Asia.

The cold wind began to be felt in extreme northern Luzon in late October, according to Pagasa.

It is expected to peak in January and February.

Juanillo said the tailend of a cold front prevailing in the country would also bring occasional rains in the country, and enhance the cold weather.

The cold front refers to the cloudy zone produced by the convergence of cold air from the northeasterly winds and the relatively warm air from the easterly winds.

"The rain that fell on Metro Manila Tuesday morning was caused by the cold front," Juanillo said. *TJ Burgonio*

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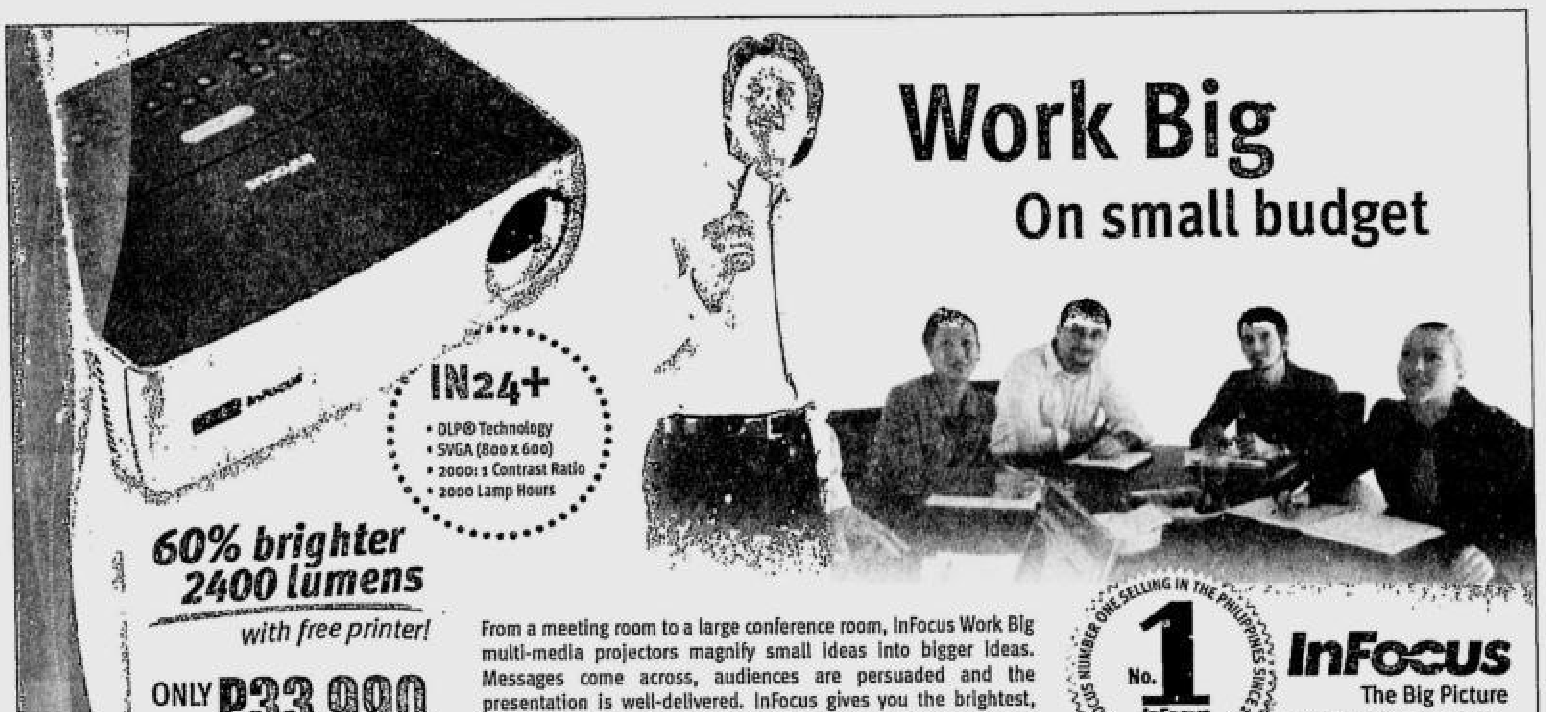

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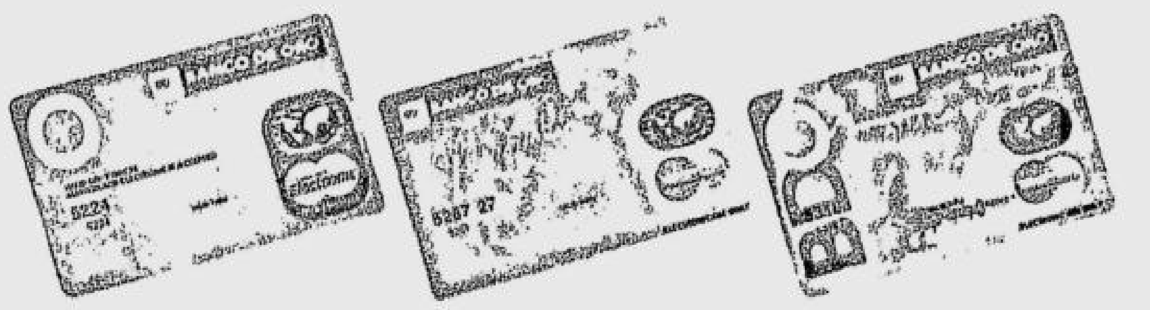

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for RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI–December 5, 2007)

Erap judge on SC seat: It's no reward; I earned it

By Leila B. Salaverria and Jocelyn R. Uy

HER ENTIRE PROFESSIONAL history, not the conviction for plunder of deposed President Joseph Estrada by the Sandiganbayan division she headed, was the basis for her appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Teresita Leonardo-de Castro stressed yesterday.

De Castro, erstwhile Sandiganbayan presiding justice, took her oath as the newest member of the Supreme Court before Chief Justice Reynato Puno on Tuesday morning, bringing to six the number of women justices in the 15-member tribunal.

Asked about speculation that her appointment was a reward for convicting Estrada, President Macapagal-Arroyo's predecessor, De Castro pointed out that she had spent more than three decades working in the law.

"I stand by my record from the time I was employed 34 years ago up to the time that I was appointed [to the Supreme Court]. That should be enough to explain my appointment to the highest court of the land," she told reporters.

Estrada yesterday bluntly described De Castro's appointment as a "reward for an unjust conviction."

"The appointment was no longer a surprise to me. It was a reward for my unjust conviction and for upholding the Supreme Court's move to oust me in 2001," Estrada said, referring to the "constructive resignation" ruling Chief Justice Puno, then an associate justice on the high court, put forth to justify the former president's ouster.

The tribunal had ruled that even if Estrada did not sign a resignation letter, his successive actions that culminated in his departure from Malacañang constituted a "constructive resignation."

"But I cannot really blame her for convicting me because she and the other justices would get the ire of the SC if they ruled otherwise. It would only show that it was wrong in removing me from the presidency," Estrada said.

The Sandiganbayan Special Division—with De Castro as chair and Associate Justices Francisco Villaruz Jr. and Diosdado Peralta as members—found Estrada guilty of plunder for illegally amassing P545 million in "jueteng" payoffs and millions more in commissions from deals using government funds during his two and a half years in office.

De Castro declined to comment on President Arroyo's pardon of Estrada just weeks after his conviction for plunder and sentencing by the Sandiganbayan to life in prison.

Reward

"You know, we justices will not interfere in political decisions. We completely do not want to make any comment on that," she said.

She said that if Estrada's case should reach the Supreme Court, she would inhibit herself from the hearings.

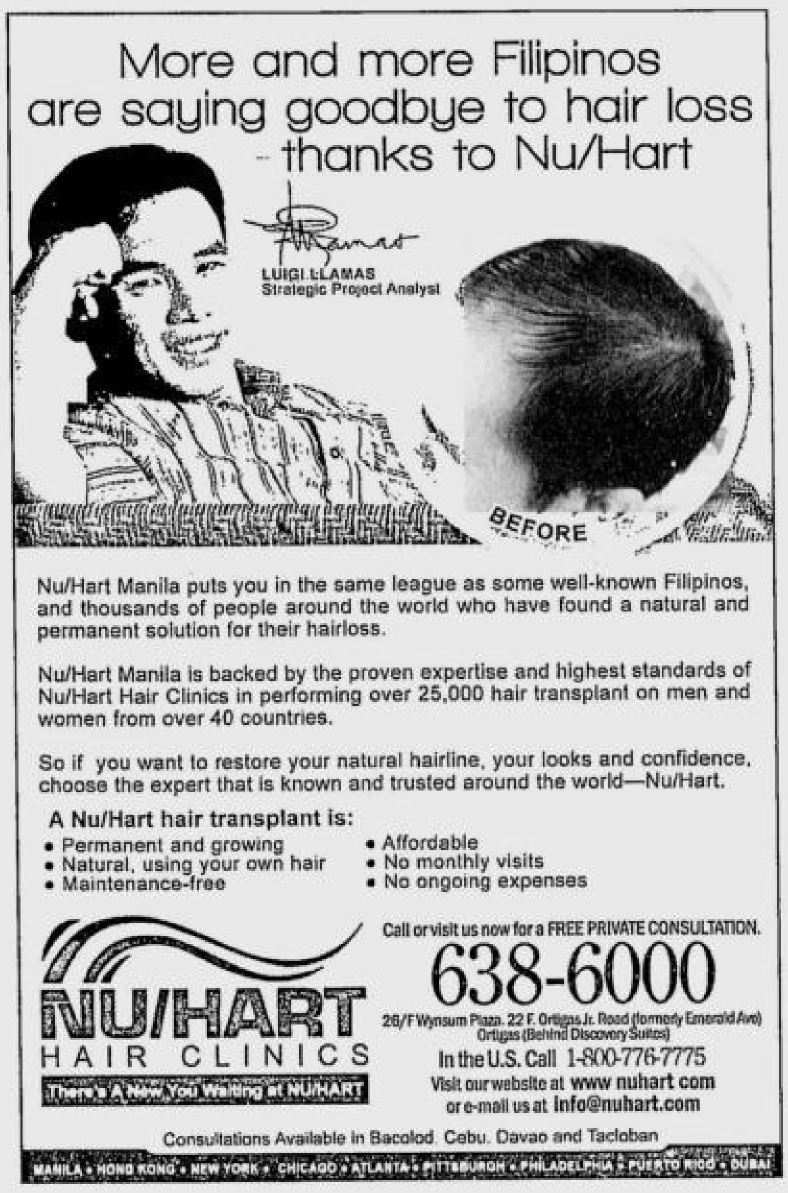
"I think that should come as a matter of course," she said.

Estrada has contested the forfeiture of P700 million of his ill-gotten assets as ordered by the Sandiganbayan. The terms of his pardon did not remove this penalty.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the former president's son, also said yesterday he had no doubt De Castro's appointment was her reward for convicting his father.

De Castro replaced Justice Cancio Garcia who retired two months ago.

Also yesterday, the new presiding justice of the Court of Appeals, Conrado Vasquez Jr., took his oath before Puno. *With Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*



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Mindanao to get 30% of budget

MINDANAO WILL RECEIVE A 30-PERCENT lump sum provision in the 2008 national budget that will be used for projects and programs expected to trigger an island-wide development, according to Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"Mindanao is not the backdoor of the Republic but the front door to the tiger economies of Southeast Asia," De Venecia told the first-ever meeting of the Regional Development Council of Region 10 at the House of Representatives composed of governors, congressmen and regional directors of Northern Mindanao.

De Venecia and Rep. Edcel Lagman, chairman of the House committee on appropriations, in a press statement, said Mindanao used to get a measly 10- to 11-percent share through allocations for line departments and frontline agencies.

The increase to 30 percent would help to reverse decades of uneven development that spawned lingering social and economic problems and two major insurgencies, they said.

Rep. Rufus Rodriguez said the lump sum would roughly translate into some P180 billion to help finance some of Mindanao's long-awaited projects and programs to fight poverty and hasten development.

De Venecia said congressmen, governors and regional directors have to start identifying some 30 to 50 major projects for the region and "introduce specific projects under this provision."

The RDC discussed the Medium-Term Regional Development Plan of Northern Mindanao, including the major programs and projects it intends to push in the remaining years of the administration.

New diplomates in opthalmology

THE NEW DIPLOMATES IN OPTHALMOLOGY will be conferred their certificates by the Philippine Board of Opthalmology tomorrow at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, to be followed by their formal induction on Friday during opening rites for the annual meeting of the Philippine Academy of Opthalmology.

The new diplomates recently completed an accredited eye residency training program and passed the exams given by the board.

They are Doctors Jaime V. Balingit Jr., Vina P. Ballado, Ramon Augustus D. Boniol, Gabriel S. Bunagan, Angelica B. Cabero, Francis Raymond M. Castor, Louie M. Chan, Maria Catherina G. Coronel, Maya Fe N. Darjuan, Jinkee S. Fernandez, Jose C. Francisco III, Anabelle F. Galias, Krishlex G. Gruezo, Donovan T. Jabines;

Marie Joan V. Loy, Peggy Ann S. Velayo-Manese, Tricia V. Mercado-Flores, Andrea Kristina F. Monzon, Tricia Andrea R. Morada, Carlo Antonino L. Nasol, Joseph M. Ranche, Karen B. Reyes, Amiel N. Rodriguez, Peter Paul T. Ronque, Patrick A. Santiago, Darlene M. Seno-Tan, Cheryl C. Tamayo, Eric Constantine G. Valera and Manuel L. Yu-Chua Jr.

Magdalo trial to get new venue

THE NEXT HEARING in the coup d'etat trial of the military officers who staged the Oakwood mutiny of 2003 may be moved to another venue following last week's incident where one of the accused, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, led a walkout from the courtroom that culminated in the takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel for seven hours.

Members of Judge Oscar Pimentel's staff confirmed the hearing set for Dec. 11 would push through but were uncertain if it would be conducted in the same courtroom in the new City Hall building or moved elsewhere.

On Thursday, Trillanes, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and their supporters walked out of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 in the middle of a defense presentation, marched down Makati Avenue and barged into the Peninsula Manila to demand President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation, prompting Pimentel to cite them for contempt.

"Any of the parties can request a change in venue, but it's still at the discretion of the presiding judge," said court clerk Edmund de Javing.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said he would ask Executive Judge Winlove Dumayas to move the next hearing to the session hall in the old City Hall building, which is several meters in front of the new building.

Yabut said the old building would be easier to secure and the soldiers on trial would not have to ride elevators to the courtroom, unlike in the new building where Pimentel's court is located on the 14th floor.

Binay said securing the rebel soldiers was still the responsibility of their military escorts.

"That's not the job of the city. It's primarily the job of the escorts. That's why we're wondering why nobody made an effort to stop them [last Thursday]," he said. *DJ Yap*

Villarosa, Puno to be summoned

THE HOUSE COMmittee on ethics will summon Deputy Speaker Amelita Villarosa and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to shed light on the distribution of cash to congressmen in Malacañang on Oct. 11.

The committee will also ask Palace officials to furnish it with the list of congressmen who were present at the gathering, which took place a few hours before the House junked the latest impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, thus granting her another year of immunity against another such suit.

Romblon Rep. Eleandro Madrona, committee chair, said Villarosa would be asked to bring documents like bank records that would show the source of the money that was handed out to the congressmen. *Christian V. Esguerra*

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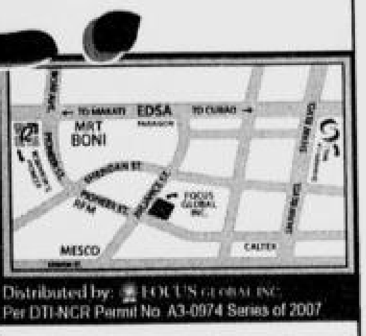

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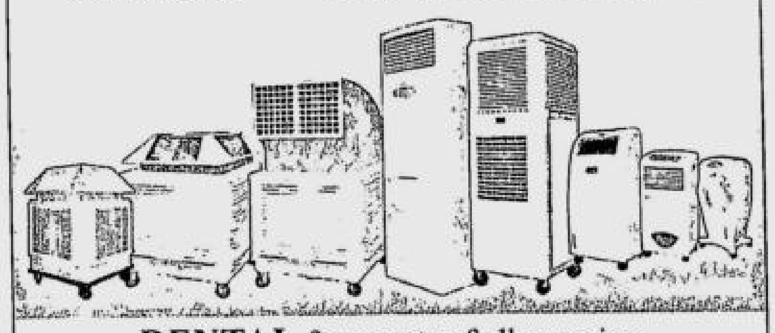

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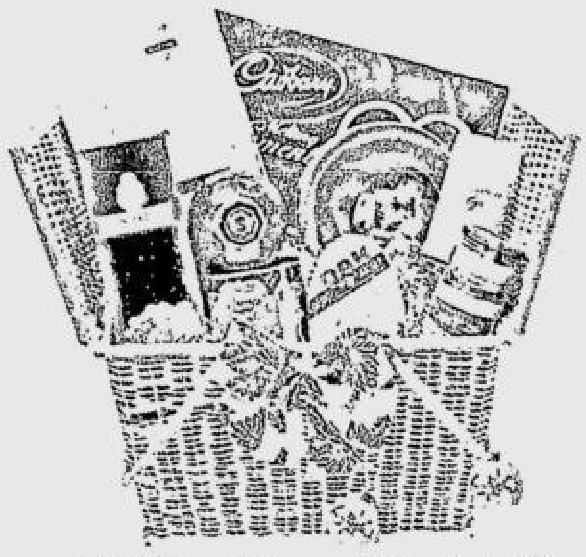

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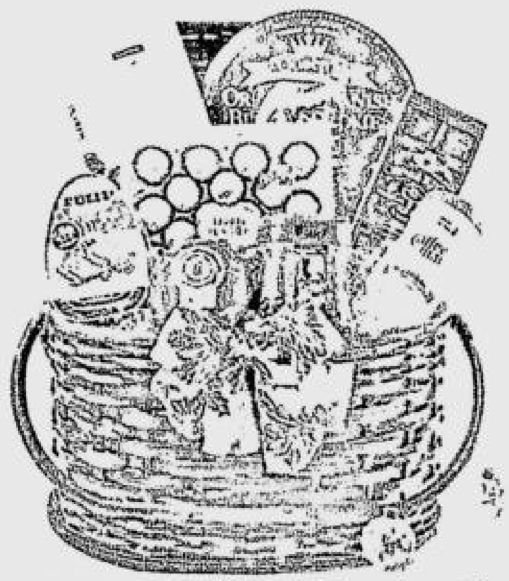

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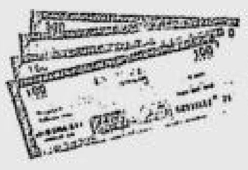

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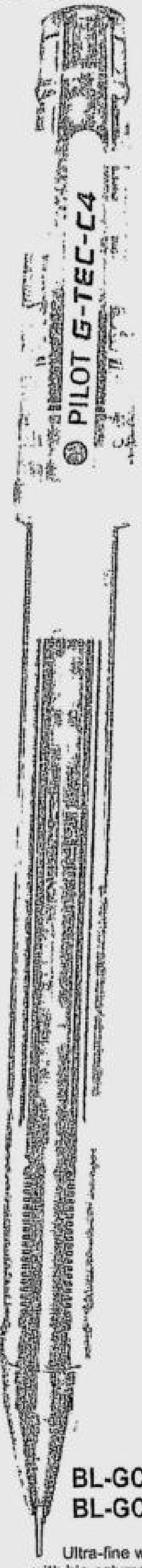

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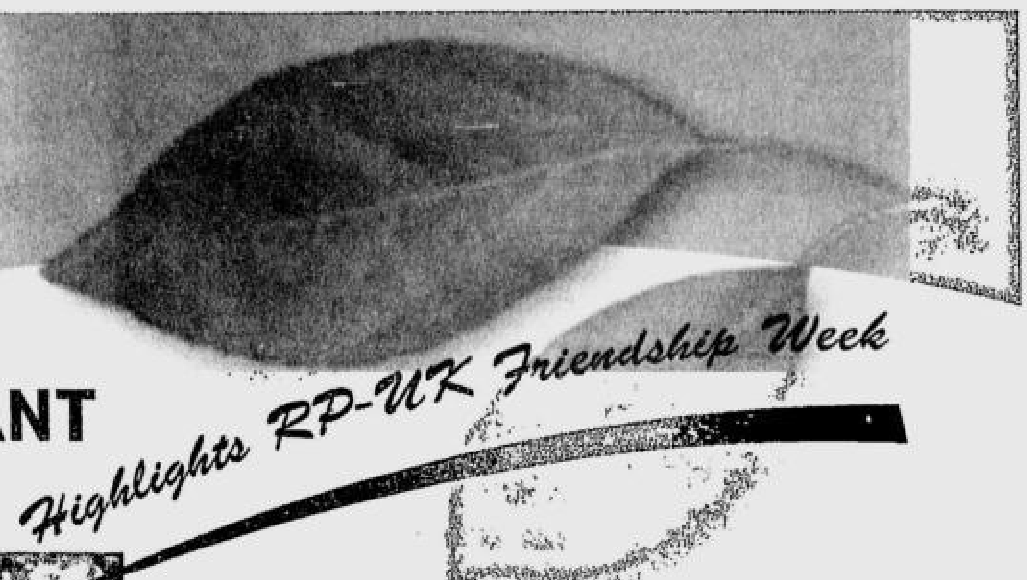
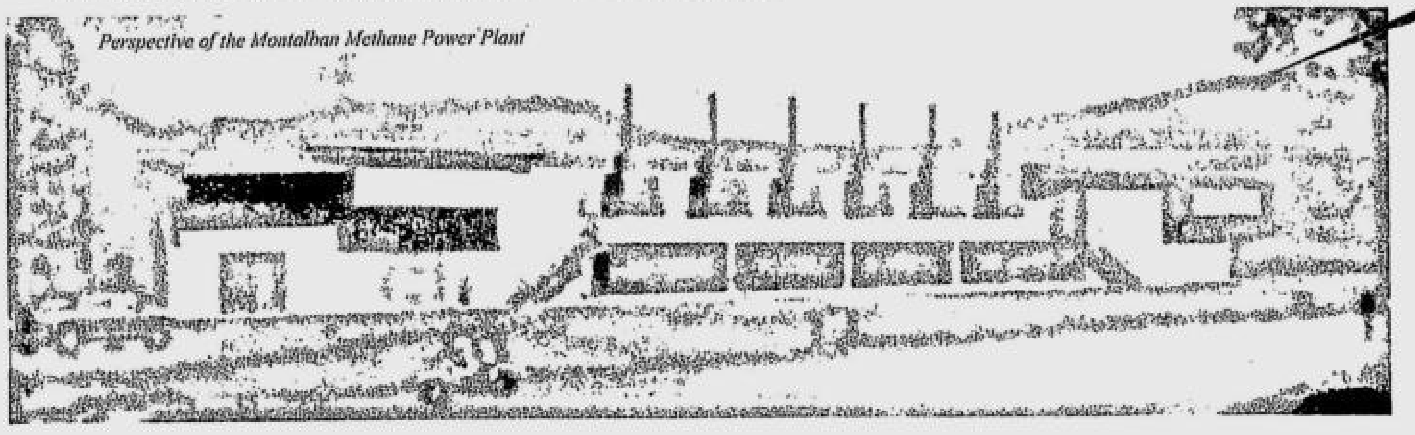


MONTALBAN METHANE POWER PLANT INAUGURATES TODAY

Highlights RP-UK Friendship Week


Perspective of the Montalban Methane Power Plant

The Philippines is now all set to join the world in the battle against global warming.

Today, all roads lead to the Province of Rizal for the soft launch of the Montalban Methane Power Plant, a P1.65 billion waste-to-energy project at the heart of Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), Rizal.

Montalban Methane Power Plant's soft launch highlights this year's celebration of the Philippine-British Friendship Week which began November 30 and ends on December 09. Said methane power plant has the United Kingdom as its major investor as the latter aims to help the Philippines reduce its dependence on conventional fossil-based sources of energy.

No less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lauded what has been highly-touted to be a model for waste-to-energy projects in the world, because of its impact on the global campaign for environment-friendly power production.

THE POWER PLANT

Dubbed the "Rodriguez Landfill Methane Recovery and Electricity Generation Project", the Montalban Methane Power Plant is expected to generate 15 megawatts of electricity over a period of 10 years beginning May 2008.

Under a build-own-and-operate program, the Montalban Methane Power Corporation (MMPC) is investing P1.65 billion in the project to capture the landfill gas (LFG) or methane from the Rodriguez sanitary landfill to produce electricity enough to provide 15,000 households with power.

MMPC President and energy economist Peregrino P. Fernandez, Jr. said the project will put the Philippines at the forefront of Waste-to-Energy CDM projects in Asia. "We are also a step ahead of China, which has yet to build its methane power plant at a landfill in Shanghai."

Methane is a flammable gas derived from decaying wastes. While methane could produce electricity, it is one of the greenhouse gasses that are 21 times more potent as an environmental pollutant than carbon dioxide.

At present, 5 million tons of solid wastes at the Rodriguez sanitary landfill produce and emit methane into the atmosphere, which has a bio-degradable fraction of around 60%. It is the biodegradable organic content of the waste that is important for "Waste to Energy Projects." The organic portion of landfill waste contains the molecular carbon that can ultimately be converted to methane by the decomposition process.

"Simply put, our garbage is 'world-class.' Metro Manila has the best composition of garbage to produce methane. And we have the best segregation (process for non-biodegradable wastes) because it is done manually," explained Fernandez, citing the work of scavengers who have eliminated plastics from the mount of garbage.

Under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Certified Emission Reductions or CERs are issued in return for a reduction of atmospheric carbon emissions whereas one CER is equivalent to an emission reduction of one ton of carbon dioxide.

Through this market-based mechanism, industrialized nations that emit large quantities of greenhouse gasses contribute to a fund that goes to developing countries that earn CERs or "carbon credits" for emission-curbing projects.

Fernandez added that not only does the power plant qualify as an emission-curbing project under the Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) but assures the country of at least 500,000 CERs through its methane recovery operation.

WHAT IT WILL DO

Under Republic Act 9003, all cities and municipalities are to put up a sanitary landfill but its abandonment phase is commonly limited to just covering it up with soil.

For the first time in Philippine history, a garbage landfill will be a major player among independent power producers and a model for pollution-reduction development projects in Asia.

The once sleepy Municipality of Rodriguez stands to earn millions from the operation of the Montalban Methane Power Corporation (MMPC) which has committed 10 percent of its gross revenue to the major stakeholders that also include the Provincial Government and landfill operator International SWIMS.

Moreover up to 150 jobs will be created during its construction and some will be retained for the plant operation.

"Overall, the project stands to gift our country of three things: contribute to the displacement of fossil fuel which translates to dollar savings, environmental benefits, and finally a respectable landfill management program. In fact, we are even including in the project an Education Center wherein we can share to visitors and teach students from all over the country about our waste-to-energy plant," Fernandez emphasized.

Montalban Methane Power Plant Benefits

- ***Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction:*** The global warming potential of methane, the main component of LFG, is 21 times than that of carbon dioxide. By destroying the methane gas, the methane power plant will have a positive impact on reducing climate change.
- ***General Well-being:*** By collecting the gas, the amount venting to the atmosphere is greatly reduced. This has a positive impact on greenhouse gas reduction and reduces the harmful health effects on the people working or living near landfill sites.
- ***Energy Generation:*** Methane is a clean fuel. The recovery of LFG and generation of power will contribute to the sustainable development of the Rodriguez municipality.
- ***Jobs Creation:*** The Montalban Methane Power Plant is designed, being constructed, and will be operated using local resources and supported by international experts. Employment will be created both during construction and during its operation.
- ***Demonstration:*** The Montalban Methane Power Plant will be one of the first CDM landfill projects in the Philippines, thus building significant experience in the country for LFG technology.
- ***Education:*** An education centre will be constructed to provide information about the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), LFG to Energy ("LFGTE") projects, clean energy technologies, and the power plant itself.

PROJECT FORECAST

The 10-year waste-to-energy project to rise at the sanitary landfill in Rodriguez, Rizal by May 2008 has the potential to exceed its 15-megawatt power output target and may operate beyond 10 years.

Montalban Methane Power Corporation is a 60-40 Filipino majority firm, owned by mining mogul Salvador B. Zamora II. Zamora earlier cited his concern for the environment as what fueled him to invest in the project. Zamora is also involved in other renewable energy projects like run-of river hydros, biomass energy and particularly the Philphos Waste Heat-to-Energy Power Plant.

Aerial Photo of Landfill

MESSAGES

MALACANAN PALACE
MANILA

Warmest felicitations to the Provincial Government of Rizal, the Montalban Methane Power Corporation (MMPC) and the residents and local officials of Rodriguez, Rizal on the occasion of the Inauguration of the Montalban Methane Power Plant.

Once again, Filipinos give credence to the saying, "*May Pera sa Basura*" with the Rodriguez Landfill Methane Recovery and Electricity Generation Project as our embodiment of that popular adage. From hereon, the province of Rizal will not only profit from receiving the bulk of Metro Manila's garbage, it will also stand to gain from the methane power that will be generated from that same garbage. Surely, we will see our country at the forefront in "waste-to-energy" projects and as a model for environmental protection in the world.

Once in operation, the Montalban Methane Power Plant will produce 15 MegaWatts of electricity, enough to power up to 15,000 households. And by utilizing this alternative source of energy, we will be significantly reducing the amount of methane emitted in the air, boosting our efforts in combating climate change and global warming. Hence, I laud the provincial government of Rizal and the local government of Rodriguez, together with MMPC, for having the foresight and the will to undertake this most exceptional project.

On this project's inauguration, may you be further inspired to continue pursuing projects that will not only benefit the people of Rizal, but also our country and the rest of the world. Congratulations!

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines

The British Embassy

I welcome the Montalban Methane Power Corporation. Today we begin the process of recovering methane from waste and use it to power our homes and our factories. This project is an initial step in what we hope will be the gradual re-greening of the metropolis and its environs while producing energy that is clean and sustainable.

The United Kingdom is proud to be a part of this exciting endeavour. Our efforts are certainly motivated by initiatives such as this. It is appropriate that the MMPC inauguration is part of this week's celebration of UK-Philippines Friendship. Our theme "Business that Cares" hopes to train the spotlight on cooperation agreements and joint venture arrangements that companies in the UK and the Philippines undertake together that produce economic value, create jobs, improve the local economy, and ensure a sustainable future.

Let us continue developing and activating innovative and sustainable projects like this in other areas of the country. I promise you that you will always receive our full support and cooperation.

Thank you and cheers to all!

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'Junket not fun' but 3 solons seek probe

From page A1

inquiry into what they called the "extravagant junket."

Representatives Teodoro Casiño, Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza wanted the House committee on ethics to look into the matter, especially in the wake of the cash distribution among the President's allies in Malacañang on Oct. 11.

"The unusual size of the House contingent, their questionable role on the trip and the unexplained expenses are too glaring to ignore," they said in House Resolution No. 367. "An investigation is necessary to ensure that there is no wastage of public funds on unnecessary foreign travel."

Casiño was not appeased by Speaker Jose de Venecia's assurance on Monday that the House of Representatives shelled out not a single centavo to finance the trip of the congressmen.

He said De Venecia could not do a Pontius Pilate because he should not have allowed such a huge delegation to join the President in the first place.

"He can't wash his hands of the issue," the Bayan Muna lawmaker told the INQUIRER. "He had the responsibility to ensure that the delegation was not too big, especially because we have so many things to do in the House."

Casiño cited the ongoing deliberations on the cheaper medicines bill, which is in danger of missing the Christmas break deadline for passage set by De Venecia.

Bunye, who is accompanying Ms Arroyo, said the Spanish government paid for the trip of the members of the official Philippine delegation, which included the First Family, five Cabinet members, three senators and House leaders Amelita Villarosa and Danilo Suarez.

Bunye said that of the congressmen who joined the trip, only two—Villarosa and Suarez—were included in the official list. The rest were "KKB" (*kanya kanyang bayad*—on their own).

It's cold out there

Senior Deputy Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II yesterday defended his colleagues, saying that joining the President's European trip was not exactly a "junket" at this time of the year.

"It's very cold there so where would these congressmen go?" he said. "Besides, being part of a state visit is always taxing because of the President's schedule."

Gonzales was optimistic that his colleagues would be back before the cheaper medicines bill was passed by the lower house. The landmark measure has yet to be put to a vote, partly because of lengthy concerns raised by Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia.

Not part of the trip

Gonzales' name was included in the list of congressmen who purportedly tagged along with Ms Arroyo in a text message that made the rounds of reporters yesterday. The INQUIRER learned that the message was composed by someone close to De Venecia.

But Gonzales apparently was not part of the trip as he was present at the regular session the other day and yesterday. So was Deputy Speaker Simeon Datumanong, who was on the list released upon the authorization of De Venecia. Datumanong presided over the session on Monday.

Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III told the INQUIRER that he did not leave town, although his name was on the list of congressmen who went with Ms Arroyo on the European trip.

Northern Samar Rep. Sharie Ann Tan said she skipped the trip because she wanted to take part in the House deliberations on the cheaper medicines bill. Tan was also reported to have joined the trip.

In the resolution, Casiño and company expressed their suspicion that the money spent for their colleagues' European trip had been sourced from public funds.

A TOAST TO 400 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP: Spain's King Juan Carlos I toasts his guest of honor during the gala dinner given in honor of President Arroyo and her delegation. It could not be confirmed at press time if her entire 200-strong party was also invited by the royals.

MALACAÑANG PHOTO

In a separate statement, he asked the House leadership to disclose the basis for choosing the members of the congressional delegation, their roles in the state visit, the cost of their trip and the source of the funds.

Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra, chair of the house committee on agriculture, said all lawmakers who went with Ms Arroyo were given assignments to help in her various engagements with the host government and the Filipino community.

Own money

In a text message to the INQUIRER, Mitra said he spent his own money in going to Europe. He added that he didn't join the chartered flight and had left one day earlier.

Mitra said he went to Spain as chair of the House agriculture panel to witness the signing of memoranda of agreement on the feasibility study for biofuels, feasibility study for blue fin tuna development, swine generic improvement, meat laboratory upgrading and the rehabilitation of the country's abaca industry.

He said there were also agreements covering a jathropa plantation in Palawan, the sustainable management of coastal resources, fisheries, microfinance and technology transfer and business packaging.

Mitra also denied reports that his mother, Cecile, went with him.

"My mother is a stroke victim since 1979 and still limping up to now. She didn't joint the trip," he said.

They financed the trip

Administration representatives who went with the President to Europe moved to debunk insinuations that Malacañang or the House had spent for the lawmakers' trip.

"We personally financed our expenses," said Misamis Occidental Rep. Herminia Ramiro and Zambales Rep. Mitos Magsaysay in a joint statement to dismiss the insinuations of patronage.

Tarlac Rep. Monica Louise Prieto-Teodoro said she paid for her own airfare and accommodations. No public funds were used for her trip.

Prieto-Teodoro left one day ahead and was not among those on board the chartered Philippine Airlines plane that flew the bulk of the presidential entourage.

No business in Europe

Meanwhile, Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Jinggoy Estrada yesterday criticized their colleagues for joining the President on her trip to Spain.

Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago, Edgardo Angara and Juan Miguel Zubiri are part of Ms Arroyo's huge entourage but Pimentel and Estrada said only Santiago had a reason for joining the President since she is chair of the Senate committee on foreign affairs.

Senate President Manuel Villar also said that the lawmakers should come clean on who financed their travel and expenses because it was not right that they spent public money on a junket. *With a reports from Gil C. Cabacungan and Michael Lim Ubac*

Ateneo de Zamboanga Christmas fellowship

GRADUATES OF Ateneo de Zamboanga University residing in Metro Manila will hold a fellowship and Christmas party on Dec. 15 at the Archipelago Building, North Avenue, Quezon City.

Paul Pe, president of the Ateneo de Zamboanga University Alumni Association (Adzumaa), is urging all alumni members to attend the annual get-together that will start at 6 p.m.

Pe said new members will be inducted during the party.

For details, call: Atty. Gues Doroja at 0917-5285560; Nando Roxas at 0916-9978994; Nan Hernandez at 0927-9760670; and Mayeth at 0917-8577861.

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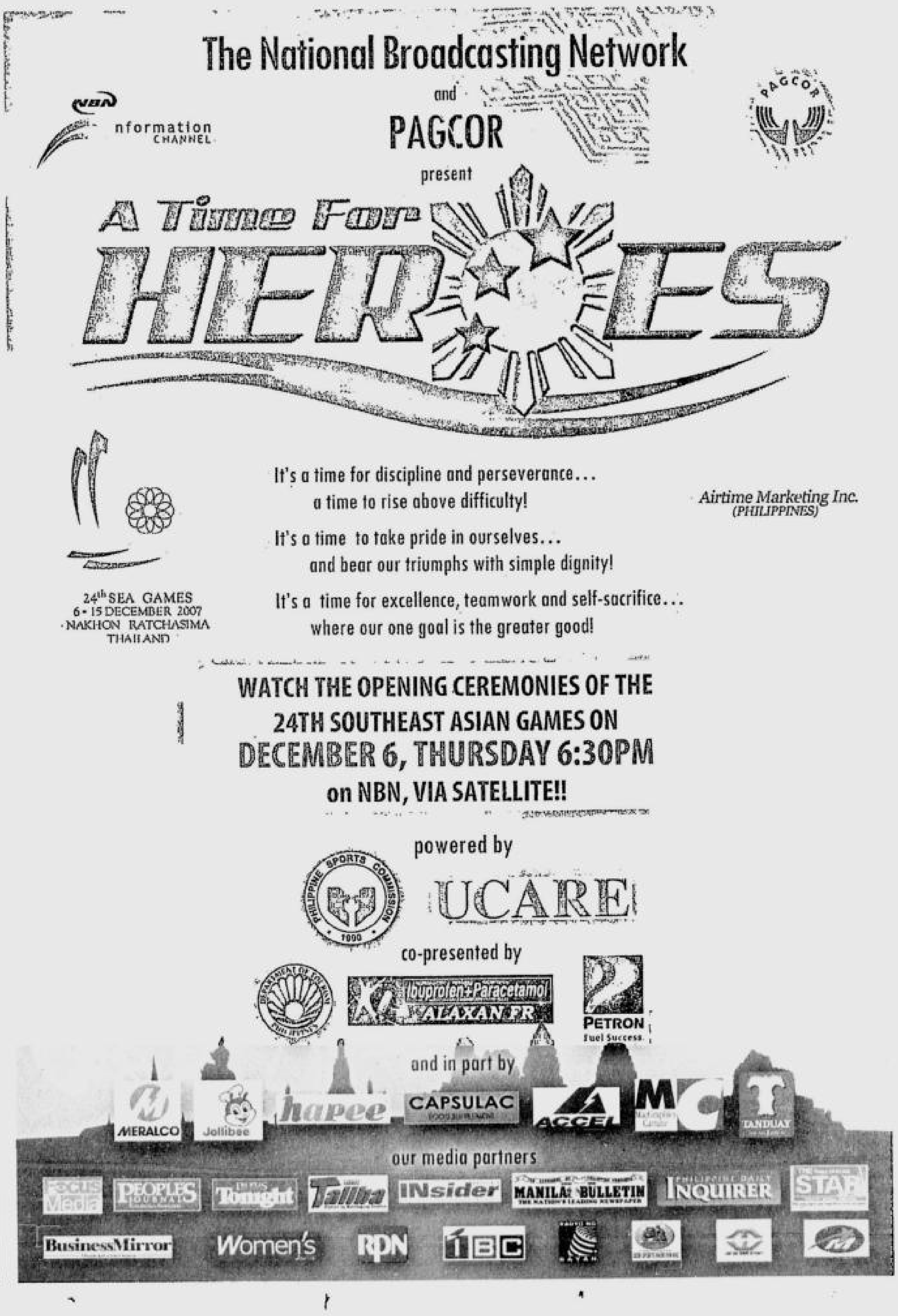

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After 1,700 km, farmers start Metro 'tour'

From page A1

Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman flew to Bukidnon yesterday to inspect the disputed property now owned by San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI), a subsidiary of San Miguel Corp.

"We plan to stay for some time in front of the DAR to await Secretary Pangandaman's decision. We will not go home empty-handed," said one of the marchers, Napoleon Merida Jr., chair of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association.

The farmers have gained the support of other farmer organizations such as the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, and religious lay groups such as the Samahang Lingkod ng Bayan.

Malacañang had earlier ordered Pangandaman to rule on the dispute. He is scheduled to make an announcement at a press conference this morning.

'Undo past mistake'

Merida called on Pangandaman "to undo the past mistake" of the DAR and do the farmers justice this time by giving back the land that was awarded to them more than 10 years ago.

"The DAR abandoned us in the past by letting the land conversion order go unchallenged," Merida said.

The marchers are among the 137 identified farmer-beneficiaries of the former Quisumbing Estate in Bukidnon, which was placed under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) and redistributed on Sept. 25, 1995, through certificates of land ownership award.

These certificates were entered into the Sumilao Register of Deeds on Oct. 13, 1995, and were the basis of the farmers' claim of vested rights over the estate.

But in March 1996, then Executive Secretary Ruben Torres issued an order allowing the conversion of the property from purely agricultural to agri-industrial use. The order effectively provided the Quisumbing family an escape from the CARP.

In August 1999, despite opposition from DAR officials, Torres' order was upheld by the Supreme Court.

In 2002, the Quisumbing family sold the property to SMFI.

Last year, as the farmers were preparing to reclaim the property on grounds that the five-year period for implementing the new land-use plan had lapsed, SMFI announced that it would set up a hog farm—an activity that was not specified in Torres' order for land-use conversion.

According to Merida, the Supreme Court upheld Torres' conversion order because the DAR failed to file a motion for reconsideration on time.

"As a result, the farmer-beneficiaries' certificates of land ownership award were canceled, and their land was given back to the landowner who, in the end, did not honor the land conversion order," Merida said.

Cease and desist

Pangandaman had said he intended to see for himself what was happening on the ground before deciding on the farmers' demand that a cease-and-desist order be issued against SMFI and that the property be again put under CARP coverage.

But Merida said that if Pangandaman really wanted to, he could have issued a cease-and-desist order while the DAR review of the case was pending.

He said he and the other farmers were hoping that Pangandaman would have a sense of urgency in deciding on their case.

"We are afraid that the next time we hear from Secretary Pangandaman, he would tell us to wait and be patient," Merida said.

He said Pangandaman had made the same admonition to farmers of Hacienda Velez-Malaga in Negros Occidental. As a result, he said, the delay in the resolution of the case created the condition for the buildup of violence.

"We hope this does not happen in the Sumilao case," Merida said.

Overnight at seminary

The farmers marched through Makati City later yesterday. They were to spend the night at the San Carlos Seminary.

Today, they will make a stopover at the SMC offices in Pasig City before continuing their march to Quezon City.

They are to hear Mass at the Church of Gesu at the Ateneo de Manila University, which will be celebrated by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, a former bishop of Bukidnon.

After a picket at the House of Representatives, the farmers are to set up camp tomorrow at the DAR central office and make another "side trip" to Manila, where they will try to hold a rally at the historic Chino Roces (formerly Mendiola) Bridge.

HELP WANTED NOW: The tiny South Pacific island
change conference ongoing in Bali do more than pay
urgent action now. Giant tides threaten to inundate

'Climate refuge
rising seas seek

From page A1

panding from warmth and from the runoff of melting land ice may displace millions of coastal inhabitants worldwide in this century if heat-trapping industrial emissions are not sharply curtailed.

A Europe-based research group, the Global Governance Project, will propose at the two-week Bali meeting that an international fund be established to resettle "climate refugees."

Summarizing the plight of islanders from Papua New Guinea, Ursula Rakova said: "We don't have vehicles, an airport. We're merely victims of what is happening with the industrialized nations emitting 'greenhouse gases.'"

The sands of Rakova's islands, the Carteret atoll northeast of Bougainville island, have been giving way to the sea for 20 years. The saltwater has ruined the villagers' taro gardens, a food staple, and has contaminated their wells and flooded homesteads. The remote islands now suffer from chronic hunger.

Sea rise

In a landmark series of reports this year, the UN climate-science network reported that seas rose by a global average of about 3 millimeters (0.12 inches) annually from 1993 to 2003. But a 2006 study by Australian oceanographers found the rise was much higher, almost 2.5 centimeters (one inch) every year, in parts of the western Pacific and Indian oceans.

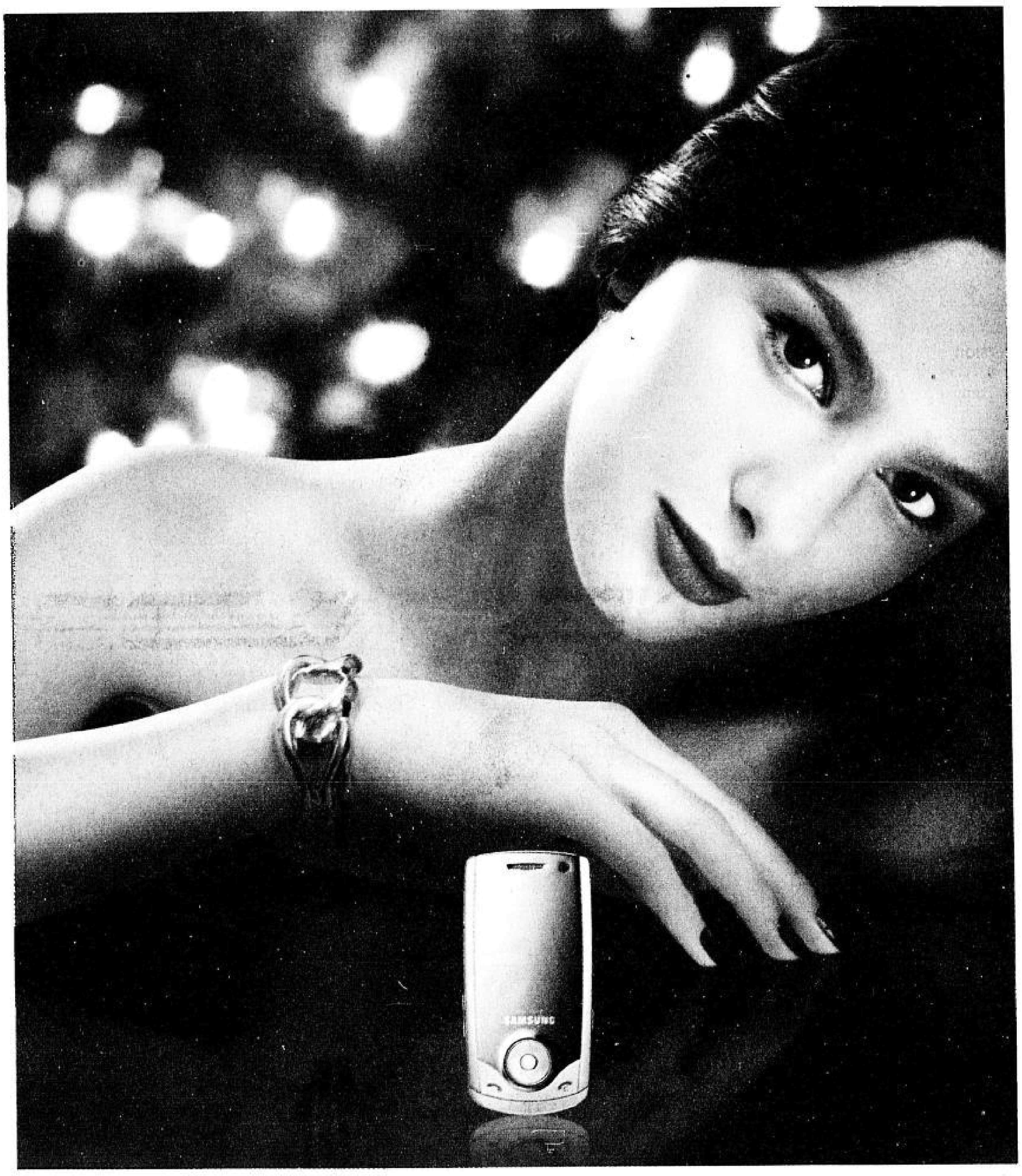
"It turns out the ocean sloshes around," said the University of Tasmania's Nathaniel Bindoff, a lead author on oceans in the UN reports. "It's moving, and so on a regional basis the ocean's movement is causing sea level variations—ups and downs."

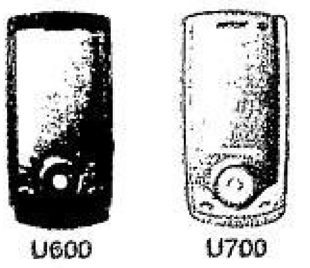
Regional temperatures and atmospheric conditions, currents, undersea and shoreline topography are all factors contributing to sea levels. On some atolls, which are the above-water remnants of ancient volcanoes, the coral underpinnings are subsiding and adding to the sinking effect.

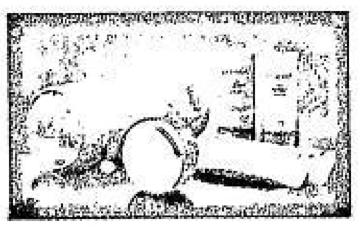
The oceanic "sloshing" is also steadily taking land from such western Pacific island nations as Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.

'Adaptation Fund'

Invading waves last year forced some villagers in Kilu on the Bismarck Sea to move their houses inland 20 or more meters—taking along their







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Pampanga folk cook biggest . . .

From page A1

The ingredients were hefty: Four liters of cooking oil, 5 kg of finely minced garlic, 10 kg of chopped red onions, 100 kg of Magnolia boneless chicken breasts, 5 kg of chicken gizzards, 50 cans of Purefoods *chorizo* (sausage) Bilbao, 8 liters of fish sauce, 2 kg of finely grated turmeric, 100 kg of glutinous rice, 50 kg of chicken soup, 50 kg of first-pressed coconut milk, 2 kg of raisins, 5 kilos of red bell pepper and 15 dozens of hard-boiled eggs.

The humongous dish was prepared in two stages: First, the ingredients were sautéed and then the rice was steamed on charcoal embers for three hours on a custom-made 10-foot wide black iron *paellera* (pan).

Banana leaves—bundles of them—were brought to cover the dish during the steaming which used up 10 sacks of charcoal. Four six-foot shovels were used as turners.

All the ingredients, the pan and tools were provided by the AUF, the event sponsor.

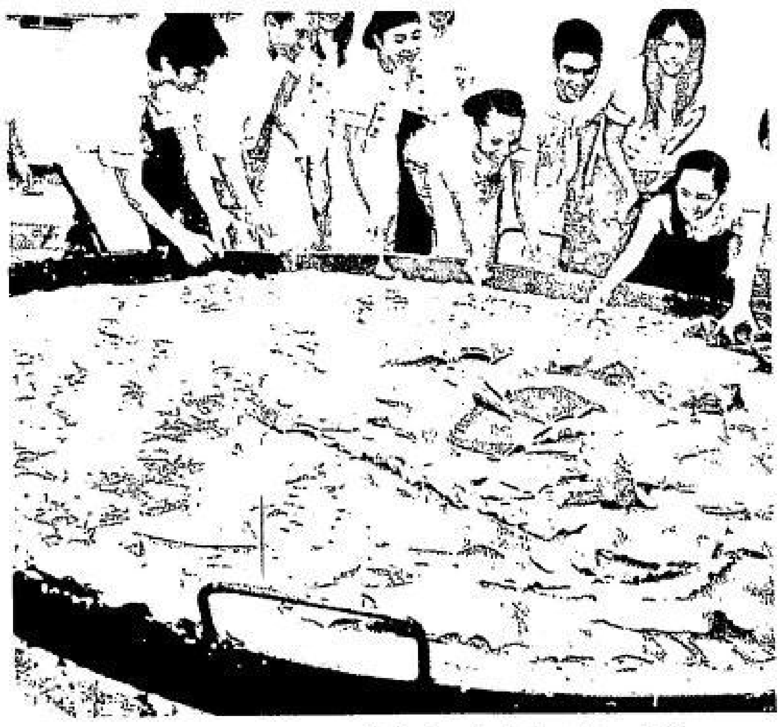
At 7 p.m., a dinner equivalent to 2,000 servings was ready.

Each bowl contained 12 ounces of the yellow-green glutinous rice dish. It was served after Gov. Eddie Panlilio led guests in a prayer of thanksgiving.

The *bringhe* was given away free or with a P20-donation for a charity of the SVD mission in Porac, Pampanga.

Symbol of hospitality

The event, held in the garden of the provincial capitol, was among the activities lined up for the weeklong observance of the 436th anniversary of the founding of Pampanga by Spanish colonizers.



TOO MANY COOKS do not spoil the broth. In fact, it took 21 wannabe cooks to produce the bringhe, a paella-like dish, in time for the 436th anniversary of the founding of Pampanga, a province known for its culinary excellence. TONETTE T. OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

A symbol of Kapampangan hospitality, the *bringhe* is standard fare in fiestas in the Kapampangan-speaking towns of Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Tarlac.

Tayag said the jumbo-size dish was a "composite" *bringhe*. It adapted elements from the recipes of Gene Gonzales, Delin's Restaurant of Angeles City, Everybody's Café of San Fernando, Medina family of Arayat, INQUIRER food columnist Mickey Fenix and Tayag's mother Adoracion (Apong During).

Aeta version

Aeta, members of a Negrito tribe in Pampanga, call their version of a less-garnished *bringhe kalameng manuk* or chicken cake.

While this *bringhe* has not been entered in the Guinness Book of Records, it has kept up with the Kapampangan tradition of springing wonderful surprises, according to provincial tourism officer Ian Mejia.

The festival of giant lanterns and the feast of *tugak* (frog), as well as the cooking of the biggest plate of *sisig* (bits of pork head, ears and chicken liver garnished with vinegar and lime) and preparing the longest *longanisa* (native sausages) are among the crowd-drawing events in the province.

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of Funafuti Atol demands that a major climate lip service to retard global warming but call for the small nation. AFP

es' fleeing from help in Bali

pigs, chickens and fears of worse to come. It did, on Nov. 25, when the highest waters yet sent them scurrying.

The scene is repeated on shores across the Pacific, most tragically on tiny island territories with no "inland" to turn to.

"Our people have been there 300 or 400 years," Rakova said. "We'll be moving away from the islands we were born in and grew up in. We'll have to give up our identity."

On Tuesday, Rakova and other victims of climate change have gone to Bali to appeal for a vast increase in international aid to protect and compensate them for rising seas, crop-killing drought and other likely impacts of global warming.

The "Adaptation Fund," which is being developed under UN climate agreements to enable poorer countries to adjust to a warmer world, has thus far drawn a mere US$67 million for a task that the World Bank estimates will cost tens of billions of dollars a year.

The fund is expected to finance climate change projects ranging from sea walls to guard against expanding oceans, to improved water supplies for drought areas, to training in new agricultural techniques.

Post Kyoto deal

More than 180 nations assembled at the annual UN climate conference in Bali are taking up the fund's future among other issues on an agenda aimed chiefly at launching a two-year negotiating process to seal a deal to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

That 175-nation Kyoto accord requires 36 industrial nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions—a key source of global warming—by an average 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. The United States is the only remaining industrial nation who rejects the Kyoto agreement.

The European Union and other countries are seeking a post-Kyoto agreement that would mandate much deeper reductions by industrial nations—including, they hope, the United States—in carbon dioxide and other such emissions by power plants, factories, vehicles and other sources.

Many here also want to see China and other major emerging economies take steps to curtail the growth of their emissions.

The two weeks of talks promise to be difficult, with success far from guaranteed. *AP*

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Reward for loyalty

EDITORIAL

NOT SINCE THE DAYS OF THE LATE, UNLAMENTED Spanish dictator Generalissimo Francisco Franco has a Philippine President gone to Spain on a state visit. On the other hand, first as heir to the throne and then as king, Spain's current monarch, Juan Carlos I, has gone on several visits to the Philippines.

During the Ramos administration, Juan Carlos, the grandson of Alfonso XIII, the last Spanish monarch to claim rulership over our country, paid an act of homage that was virtually unprecedented among former colonial rulers. He laid a wreath at the foot of the Rizal Monument, an act of historic vindication for our foremost hero and the ultimate tribute to our nationhood. The president of the United States would not even consider doing a similar act, such as laying a wreath in Balangiga.

Juan Carlos, of course, presided over the swift transformation of the Spanish state from a feudal, reactionary and fascist dictatorship to a modern liberal, secular democracy. He is an authentic democratic statesman, facing down putschists who tried to take over the Spanish parliament. Spain itself was among the first countries to recognize the government of President Corazon Aquino after the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos, and Spanish aid and assistance to the Philippines have been generous and enthusiastic.

Thus a state visit, the highest manifestation of high regard between nations, by a Philippine chief executive has long been overdue. In fact, it has been twice postponed under the present administration.

In a state visit, the host country foots the bill for the visiting head of state—within limits. Normally, this hospitality extends to the visiting president, the family and top aides. The expenses of other members of the party are born by the government of the visiting leader.

Aside from President Macapagal-Arroyo, her family, her foreign secretary and some members of her Cabinet such as the trade secretary, we don't see how relevant is the presence of other members of her party. In particular, we cannot see any useful purpose served by the presence of so many members of Congress, including how it would help cement Filipino-Spanish friendship. The only lawmaker whose presence makes sense is Sen. Edgardo Angara, who has spent decades building a new, democratic relationship between the former colonial power and her sister democracy.

Under our constitutional setup, foreign affairs is generally the prerogative of the President, and unless assigned as negotiators, legislators are pretty much a third wheel during ceremonial occasions like state visits. This means that the congressmen and senators who accompanied Ms Arroyo to Spain did so not to foster a closer relationship with that country; they were brought along as a reward for their loyalty to her. Take for example, Deputy Speaker Amelita Villarosa, who came to be better (and notoriously) known for claiming to have handed out the cash gifts in Malacañang to her colleagues. She may not be useful for Filipino-Spanish friendship, but her friendship is precious to the President.

Therefore, the inclusion in the President's official party of so many congressional hangers-on was purely for partisan, local, political considerations and not in the national interest. Not even the House of Representatives, it seems, was involved in financing the legislators' travels, so their inclusion is clearly a case of presidential patronage. And possibly, a dereliction of duty. Rep. Antonio Alvarez says, for example, he was on the President's list as far back as a year ago, but with the Cheaper Medicines Bill being nursed through the House, he felt it untimely to go. And he's absolutely right.

Even if we assume there is a comfortable majority in the House to pass that bill and other pending legislation, it makes no sense to bring loyal supporters of the President along to Spain, when they should have been attending sessions at home. At the very least, what sort of bragging rights can they have, when legislation certified as urgent by the President gets passed, without their participation? Surely a 10-second photo opportunity with the King and Queen of Spain isn't compensation enough?

Or maybe it is, but it only goes to show the lack of quality of the company the President chooses to keep.

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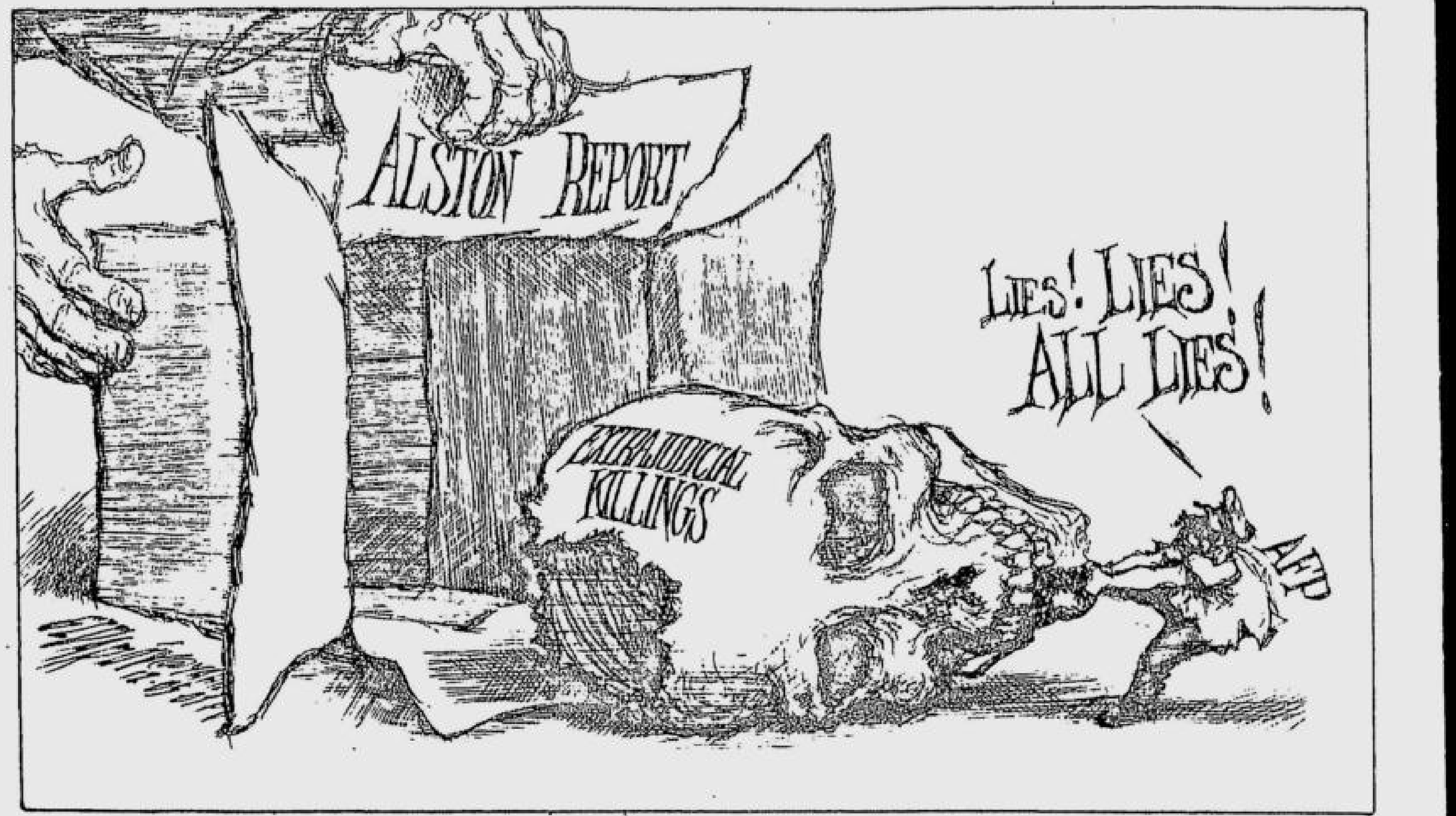

Was the police planning a bloodbath at the Pen?

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

INTIMIDATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT continues even as the threat from rebels is over. Is it just a habit of the Arroyo administration?

A senior official, who didn't want to be identified, revealed the other day that the government is planning to include the ABS-CBN network in its investigation of the second mutiny of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and their followers at the Peninsula Manila Hotel. That was after ABS-CBN said it may file charges of serious illegal detention against the police for arresting 13 of their television crew members and detaining them for several hours at Camp Bagong Diwa.

"You sue us, we'll sue you," is the message. PNP Director General Avelino Razon was more forthright. "If you sue us, we'll also sue you," he said when the newspapers reported that some of those who were arrested were thinking of filing charges against the policemen who arrested them. And yet he said the journalists did not "violate any law."

The senior official was more evasive. Although he refused to say directly that the network was being investigated, he said that the decision of the whole ABS-CBN news crew to stay in spite of police orders to leave the hotel had "raised questions." "Every one of the ABS-CBN team was left behind and every one else left," he said. "Why did they not comply with the government's request?"

His spin is that the news desk may have ordered them to stay put. "The question is, were they there for journalism, or were they there conspiring or willingly obstructing justice?" he said. He is implying that ABS-CBN is in cahoots with the Magdalo rebels.

It is understandable why the official refused to be identified. His assumption is totally false. It is not true that "every one else left" and only the ABS-CBN crew stayed behind. There were only 13 ABS-CBN crew members, but they arrested dozens of journalists, including two INQUIRER reporters. And those who were glued to their television sets clearly saw the others, many of whom were recognizable as belonging to other news organizations.

I am afraid the government does not understand the motivation of journalists. Nobody would have willingly left the Pen with such a momentous event about to take place. Photographers and TV cameramen have to be on the spot to get the news, unlike print reporters who can gather the news from witnesses and other sources. They have to capture the action, otherwise they would fail in their jobs. No, you could not have pulled out any dedicated lensman at that time. If even one of them got a photograph or footage of the action that followed after the others left, those others would hang their heads in shame the next day, get hell from their editors, probably miss a journalism award much later and regret it for the rest of their lives.

No journalist wants to be scooped. And those who leave will most likely be scooped. There is always one enterprising journalist who manages to get what the others don't. Those journalists on the scene would not have left even if their news desks told them to. So it is not true that their desks told them to stay put.

In the first place, no editor will knowingly put at risk any staff member. No, sirs, it was the spirit of competition that made those journalists stick to their guns, not orders from their bosses. Journalists are proud of their work. To fail or to get scooped is a badge of shame and there's no end to the ribbing that they get from their colleagues.

And why did the police want the journalists to get out? Were they planning to do something they did not want the journalists to witness, record and broadcast to the nation and the world? Were they, perchance, planning a bloodbath? Did they perhaps think that with Trillanes, Lim et al. dead, the threat to the Arroyo administration would be gone?

No, sir, it won't. It would have aroused other soldiers to anger and the desire to get rid of the tyranny of the Arroyo administration would increase and more and bigger mutinies would follow again and again until one of them succeeds. So they should thank the journalists for being there and prevented a bloodbath.

The unnamed official said the journalists "obstructed justice" and "put the lives of the policemen at risk." How? As ABS-CBN news and current affairs chief Maria Ressa said, the ABS-CBN crew "never stopped them from taking action." She said they were only doing their job, like PNP Director Geary Barias. "That was a news event and our job is to show you what happens," she said.

I think part of the education and training of policemen and soldiers, especially officers, is psychology and public relations. You don't get the cooperation of members of media by intimidating them. You don't establish good relations with them by threatening them. And you don't scare them by harassing them. It only makes them angrier. You don't scare journalists by filing libel charges against them. It only prompts them to dig more dirt about you. That's elementary psychology. Good public relations achieves better results. Ask the PR practitioners.

And yet they're threatening journalists despite the parting admonition of the President "not to unnecessarily rile the media [and] ... just explain what really happened."

But instead of explaining, her subordinates are threatening, and unnecessarily irritating (that's a synonym for "rile," in case they don't know what "rile" means) journalists.

Follow the President's advice. It's good advice.

Three things

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

THE FIRST THING IS THE COLD. THE COLDest country I've really been to is Russia, in 1979 then still part of the Soviet Union. Mark Twain once said his coldest winter was summer in San Francisco. Mine was Moscow. There was abundant sunshine and even more abundant vodka, but if you happened to be in a park and a cloud happened to hide the sun, you had the sensation of your breath being sucked from you. Every evening, or as soon as it got dark (the sun set at 10:30 p.m. and rose at 2:30 a.m.), I'd put a couple of (one-liter) beer bottles outside the window sill, and when I came back for them after a bath, they would be chilled.

I've been to London in the cold, too, way back in 1993, in early November, and remember that going out at night was next to impossible, especially with a fretful wind scolding the city every now and then. As everyone tells me here today, those days are over, things have gotten warmer, courtesy of global warming, and early November in 1993 was a lot colder than early December today. Warm and cold are, of course, relative terms, and depend as much on the person experiencing them as on the experience itself. Alas, age is catching up with me and I can't greatly appreciate the difference between 1993 and today.

Thankfully, with the recklessness of youth behind me, I have fortified myself with thermal underwear and layers and layers of clothing—and top everything with a winter coat. A green Jamaican bonnet and red scarf must make me look like a snowman, particularly with the lumbering gait that a ton of cloth induces, but they are absolute life-savers. A sudden wind lashes out at you, you are eternally grateful for bonnet and scarf. The wind stings your face, and when you dive into a heated place and take the things off, your face feels flushed, the tiny needles stuck to it radiating cold or heat, you don't really know which, maybe a little of both.

Everybody else, man, woman, or beast, looks dapper in black, walking at a hurried, or harried, pace, as though they were going to run out of street. That was how our hosts walked throughout the conference in leading us from building to building, and it was everything I could do to haul my tricycle—and car—pampered carcass along to keep up with them. I don't mind not looking dapper in snowman wear. I figure better warm than cool. Or kewl.

The second thing is the company I've kept. I was the only non-Muslim in a group of seven journalists (originally eight, one Pakistani disappeared after the first day) from various countries to observe how Muslims lived in Britain. There were two advantages of being with them.

One is that it's good to be the minority every now and then because it gives you an insight or two into what it means to be so. The very least of the insight it gives you is that in their countries—Bangladesh, Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt—the Muslims are the dominant group and Christians the marginal one. They are the educated and sophisticated class and the Christians the benighted one. Imagine a country where the blacks are the elite and the whites are the rabble, and you get a sense of the reversal of roles from where I stood.

While at this, however, there was an interesting, if subtle, point about the mix. That is that Muslim journalists tend to be more journalists than Muslims in the same way that Christian journalists tend to be more journalists than Christians. The women (three) tended to be more sticklers to the faith than the men (four), but the core values for most everyone tended to be more secular than religious. "What can I say?" our Pakistani friend sighed. "I'm a bad Muslim."

The other advantage of being with a group like that (for me at least) is that they do not smoke or drink. That is good for me because I'm trying to keep away from drink (I gave up smoking long ago), which used to be the best part of going to a cold country. At least they can do without them—a couple of the men confessed to me they didn't particularly mind drinking (among other vices), and one of them had a grand time in Manila. The hosts, of course, presumed they avoided vices like the plague and ate only halal. In fact, most of the men didn't mind eating non-halal food.

What can I say? Journalists do have their virtues—in their vices.

The third thing is the Promised Land, the light at the end of the tunnel, the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, or however you choose to call deliverance.

I may not be a hardy traveler but I am not a finicky one either. I take things in other countries pretty much as they are and adjust to them. You don't want to do that, why bother leaving your country? I say that because I've known Filipinos who've traveled abroad whose luggage groans from the weight of stuff they bring with them, notably food. I've never really been able to comprehend it. Other countries have much to offer by way of food, and you don't have to be adventurous to want a taste of other things, you need only be curious. For one week at least, I've partaken of little else but halal and found a great deal of it to my liking.

At the end of the conference, however, I ended up in a Filipino family's house. We were gathered from our place in early evening and brought there by car, for which I was grateful. My body was aching and my bones were tired, and the slight drizzle at the beginning of our trip had turned into whipping rain. I wondered through the cold window what it must feel to be caught in it. When we got to the house, the dining table was full of food, some of it bought from a nearby Chinese deli. In the middle of the table, steaming in all its glory after having just been scooped out of the cooker was (for me at least) the pièce de résistance.

I exclaimed, as Moses' hordes must have exclaimed in the desert on espying journey's end: "Rice!"

Media as target

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

WHEN PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO LEFT for Europe at the weekend, after security forces had swiftly crushed the foolish coup attempt by self-appointed military messiahs, she left two chilling messages to would-be coup plotters and to the media. Oozing with insufferable confidence and arrogance, the President warned that she had the backing of the military chain of command (for now) and thus any half-baked coup plot would meet the same ruthless fate as the Trillanes-Lim caper. The other was an implicit message to media that they are a likely target of a round-up for complicity in any future conspiracy to seize power.

In the military-police assault at the Peninsula Manila Hotel last week, 51 journalists were summarily arrested in a dragnet that bagged 103 people, including Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, 30 rebel soldiers and civil society activists. All were handcuffed and hauled to Bicutan for "processing," a euphemism for interrogation on suspicion of involvement in the coup attempt. The number of arrests exceeds that rounded up in the first wave of detentions of targeted enemies of the regime upon the declaration of martial law by Ferdinand Marcos on Sept. 21, 1972.

On the eve of her departure, the President met the security cluster of the Cabinet, including military and police officials. She told them not to "unnecessarily rile the media." She gave instructions to the security forces to be "very circumspect when it comes to media," saying the government was "not at war with them." On national TV, she had the gall to say she was a "believer of press freedom and the rule of law," and expressed regret that the "police procedures had become a problem to the media."

It was a statement of profound contempt for the press. The effrontery was both revolting and patronizing.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the police had to arrest everyone they felt like grabbing at the Peninsula and take them to headquarters for "verification." On Monday, three days after the President's departure, PNP Director Edgardo Doromal ordered ABS-CBN to submit news footage of the march by rebel soldiers last Thursday from the Makati regional trial court to the Peninsula and of the siege. This was the PNP's translation of the presidential directive calling for circumspection and restraint. It virtually tore up the directive. The order commanded the network to deliver the footage to the PNP on Dec. 5, with the warning, "Fail not under the penalty of law."

The PNP obviously wants to use the footage as evidence to confirm its allegations that media members were not only complicit in a conspiracy to overthrow the government but also "obstructed" law enforcement during the siege.

It was not clear from the subpoena whether the broadcast network was being investigated and for what offense. Some government officials have said the refusal of ABS-CBN journalists to heed police orders to vacate the hotel raised questions about whether they were there to report a news event or were conspiring with the rebels by "obstructing justice." Gonzalez wondered why TV cameras were already in place ahead of the arrival of the rebels at the hotel.

The media had received tips that something was afoot. These tips sparked a race among networks to be there ahead to cover the action as it broke out.

The subpoena brought to a head an issue extremely sensitive to journalists: their responsibility to serve the fundamental right of the public to be informed on public affairs the way they themselves see events, not the way authorities want them reported.

Police gave the rebels an ultimatum to surrender at 3 p.m. or be arrested. Police assault teams started to storm the hotel at 4:45 p.m. with machine gun fire and a tear gas attack. An armored personnel carrier crashed into the hotel lobby at 5:12 p.m.

Police have made much of the fact that they had asked journalists to clear the hotel, ostensibly to give them unrestricted movement to arrest the rebels. But restrictions on journalists' movements in covering conflicts strike at the heart of independent media coverage. In justifying its decision to stay in the hotel, ABS-CBN reflected a practice widely understood by experienced journalists when it said, it continued live coverage "because the public has a right to know. We calculated the risks, took precautions for our team and made the choice."

The broadcast network pointed out that "no journalist is willing to die for any newsmaker," or celebrity, least of all the vainglorious Trillanes.

The point has also been made that one important reason for the presence of journalists as eyewitnesses in conflicts is that it exposes "the excessive use of force" by security forces. There is a dark reason for the police order to media to clear the premises before their assault. If the media had left the premises, there would have been no witnesses to any possible massacre of the rebels.

The crackdown on the media is the second since the standoff at Fort Bonifacio in February 2006 during a mutiny launched by Marines. Lim was supposed to have led a march by soldiers to Makati where they would link up with a civil society rally at which he would read a manifesto calling for another people power to overthrow the Arroyo regime. The President aborted the crisis by declaring a national emergency. The government tagged certain sectors of the media as part of a conspiracy with leftists, military rebels and civil society activists to seize power.

Since then, the media have remained a permanent part of the gallery of bogeymen lined up for a crackdown in the next crisis.

'I am fighting for you'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BY THIS TIME, THE CEDAW COMMITTEE IN New York would have received a petition filed by Karen Vertido and her counsel, lawyer Evalyn Ursua, with assistance from the Women's Legal Bureau, regarding the case of rape she filed in 1996.

CEDAW, which stands for Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, has an "Optional Protocol" to hear the complaints of women who, after having tried "to seek redress from (their own) government and exhausted all avenues under the law," are now seeking justice at the international level. Adopted in 1999, the Optional Protocol has been accepted by 83 states parties, including the Philippines which signed the OP in 2003.

Karen thus becomes the first Filipino woman to submit a petition under the communications procedure of the CEDAW-OP, coming to the committee "to give an account of her rape and her re-victimization by her own government."

This time around, Karen is indicting not just businessman Jose Custodio whom she accused of rape and who was acquitted of the charge in 2005, but also the Philippine government. She alleges that her rights as a woman and a survivor of violence were violated because the judge who rendered the decision and who happens to be a woman, relied on "gender-based myths and misconceptions" and relied on a distorted reading of the testimonies, including those of mental health experts. It is also part of Karen's brief that the Philippine government, specifically the judiciary, has not done enough to enlighten and educate trial judges and prosecutors on the real nature of rape and violence against women, the psychological elements of a victim's reaction (or lack of reaction) to abuse, and the unequal status of women in this country. To illustrate, the petition also cites summaries of seven other cases where the accused rapists were likewise acquitted, and where the judges' decisions relied on gender stereotypes and biased judgments.

Eleven years after the crime, Karen's fight is still not over, and the stakes have, in fact, never been higher.

* * *

"CUSTODIO will forever be free," Karen tells me when we meet the day after the press conference where WLB announced the filing of the petition. "I have absolutely nothing to gain by this, except what it means to other women."

It's also the day after the siege at the Peninsula Manila, and Karen recalls the WLB lawyers telling her that more than half of the reporters disappeared midway through the press conference. We both laugh at the bad timing, but it seems symbolic how, once more, women's concerns are trumped by politics and violence.

Asked how this current move began, Karen recalls that a few days after the promulgation of the decision, she was "wallowing in depression" at home in Davao when a good friend called her up and convinced her to meet with former Ambassador Rosario Manalo, who was then the Philippine expert sitting in the CEDAW Committee and who had just been elected the body's chair.

Manalo told her not to give up, and that if she wanted, she could seek justice through the OP. "It took a while to sink in," Karen confesses, but she felt a faint spark of hope. "I called up Ging Ursua (her lawyer) and asked her what filing the petition would mean."

"Do we have the energy and the resources?" she remembers asking Ursua. "My feeling at the time was *tama na* (that's enough). That it was time I focused on my family and our personal concerns. But then I met with some women friends and they all encouraged me to try some more, that this might be able to help other women, other rape victims."

* * *

IN FACT, it took the Women's Legal Bureau two years to raise the money for all the research and analysis work. Aside from Ursua, WLB relied on two other lawyers, one law graduate and two interns, as well as the cooperation of several NGOs, to complete the document.

The petition is not just the first to be filed by a Filipina, but the first such petition to be filed in Southeast Asia. "Other NGOs in the region have been calling WLB and asking how they can help. They are very interested," says Karen.

On her lawyer's advice, Karen was not present at the press conference but sent instead her daughter Kai, who was just a child when her mother went public with her charges and is now a young woman. It was Kai who read Karen's statement, which opens with an acknowledgement of the men and women who made her "protracted struggle for truth and justice" bearable.

She mentions her lawyers, particularly Ging Ursua, as well Dory Avisado, her therapists Doctors Ping Conanan and June Lopez, former Sen. Letty Ramos-Shahani "who took me under her wing," and Manalo, who, "at a time I needed it most … was the instrument to deliver a message of hope."

Karen also acknowledges the help of Joy Uy-tioco, who after hearing Karen's story and issuing a generous check to support her struggle "transformed herself from a signer of her own checks into what she calls 'Karen's official beggar'."

* * *

"SO now I am here," Karen said in her message. "And you are here. We are about to send off this communication… The document carried my name but in reality (it) carries the name of every Filipino woman. For the outcome of this endeavor hopefully will change the way the judiciary and every pillar of justice handles every case of rape…

"Why do I go on fighting, I am asked over and over again… I fight because it is I who has been given the opportunity to fight. It could have been anybody else. But it landed on my lap… I fight for the young woman who reads this to you now. I fight for her daughters, and her daughters' daughters. I fight for you—everyone of you, and your daughters as well."

The loss of Spanish

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

SPANISH AS IT IS SPOKEN HAS LONG BEEN neglected in the Philippines, except in places like Cavite and Zamboanga where Chabacano is still current. Although I encounter Spanish in my work, I read it but find little need to speak it.

But things are changing. In Rome a few weeks ago, I noticed that waiters and clerks spoke to me in Spanish. It was obvious to ordinary Romans that I was a tourist and expected them to speak to me first in English before Italian. I presumed, wrongly, that they recognized me as a Filipino, and since the Philippines was a former Spanish colony, they concluded that all Filipinos speak Spanish. Upon further inquiry, I was surprised to discover that many Italians mistook me for a South American. Perhaps a native of Peru or Chile!

Three decades ago, when I first visited Europe, people presumed I was Chinese or Japanese. When I asked for something, the Italians tried to communicate vainly with their hands, then in broken English, finally in Italian. Being mistaken for a South American today only shows that the world has changed in the past three decades. Much has also changed in the way we see Spanish in the Philippines.

It has been two decades since the compulsory learning of Spanish in universities was abolished, during the term of Education Secretary Lourdes Quisumbing. I'm one of the last of a generation required to take 12 units of Spanish.

Speaking from experience, I enjoyed my Spanish classes in the Ateneo, which was not the case with other students in other universities. I particularly relished the oral exam that provided a chance to make a friend of a complete stranger as we conversed on a given situation in front of a professor for 10-15 minutes.

Having 12 units of Spanish gave me the foundation needed for a career in Philippine history, specifically my interest in the late 19th century whose documentation remains doubly locked today—physically in libraries and archives, and then because of the so-called language barrier.

Many Filipinos remain separated from their history because of language. When I was reading for my master's in Philippine studies, I almost shifted to the American period where primary source research seemed easier. Dr. Milagros C. Guerrero persuaded me to persevere in the Spanish period, arguing that with my defection, the already small group of historians with an interest and reading competence in Spanish would be further depleted.

Despite the fact that I enjoyed my Spanish language instruction, what I most remember from my Spanish classes were the drills on grammar, which I hated. I'm sure that if students had been taught and encouraged to speak rather than conjugate, if we were taught to read and appreciate literature rather than unravel the complexities of grammar and the subjunctive, many Filipinos would still be comfortable with Spanish today, if not in speaking, at least in reading.

The loss of Spanish language teaching since 1987 does not enable a new generation to enjoy jokes with a Spanish twist. For example, during the presidential campaign of 1986, Ferdinand Marcos belittled Corazon Aquino as a mere housewife incapable of handling affairs of state. A cruel joke on her name went round that would not make sense to a non-Spanish speaker: pointing to the heart, the person would say, "Corazon? Si!" then pointing to the head, "Aqui? No!" Little wonder she did not veto the move to abolish Spanish in the university curriculum in 1987.

We can see this sad development in the following:

- Nationalism and nationalist historiography that took from the writings of the 19th-century Filipino patriots in Spain, now remembered as the "Propaganda or Reform Movement," that portrayed Spain and all things Spanish as negative or evil. Spanish as a language was demonized as a sad reminder of an oppressive and colonial past, the language of an unfeeling elite. Neither did it help when the Americans took over the Philippines and propagated "*Leyenda negra*" in Philippine history, and encouraged the use of English as a language of instruction and government to the detriment of Spanish and Spanish culture.
- The uneven—and I would presume, traditional—method of teaching Spanish that was basically focused on grammar rather than conversation, reading, and an appreciation of Spanish literature. The focus on grammar was traditionally believed to be a preparation for the reading of "Don Quijote," but many teachers got so engrossed with the grammar that they forgot the literature, thus losing the hearts and minds of generations of Filipino students.
- At the time Spanish was abolished from the university curriculum, there was a prevailing sentiment to fully implement bilingual education in English and Filipino, with a preferential option for the latter. President Corazon Aquino even issued an executive order making Filipino the language of government—a well-intentioned move that unfortunately did not succeed. Spanish thus suffered twice in this move to develop language instruction in the Philippines.
- At the time Spanish was abolished from the university curriculum, there was no perceived practical use for the language, except in the realm of law and history. If you were not embarking on a career in these fields, Spanish was useless and irrelevant. *(Conclusion on Friday.)*

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Thrillers

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I WANTED TO PUN THE WORD AND PRODUCE "3LA," BEcause three "thrillers" have been at the top of my mind lately.

First, hey, it's the 25th anniversary of Michael Jackson's "Thriller." If you were around when that piece was first released, then, well, you're old, enough.

I never enjoyed Michael Jackson, but I guess he must have some talent, helped along by all those special sound and video effects. There's also something poignant listening to the lyrics of "Thriller" today, given what's happened in Jackson's life: "They're out to get you. Better leave while you can. Don't wanna be a boy. You wanna be a man."

Cebu Pen

Jackson's "Thriller" has been performed in many versions, in many places throughout the world. Which takes us to the second Thriller I wanted to tackle for today, and this is the Thriller in Cebu's Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center, which is too long a name so let's just call it the Cebu Pen (you know, as in penitentiary). As part of the rehabilitation efforts there, Byron Garcia, a security consultant, hatched this idea of having the inmates dance in the Cebu Pen quadrangle, as an alternative form of morning exercise. Their version of Jackson's "Thriller" is one grand production, with all sorts of gimmicks, including coffins on skate wheels and 1,500 inmates doing a zombie-walk routine and descending on Wenjell, a transgendered inmate. The choreographer is an architect, Vince Rosales, who works with the City Engineer's Office.

Video clips of the exercise have been featured on local TV channels as well as CNN and BBC, and I have friends from all over the world e-mailing me to say they've seen the videos, courtesy of YouTube. One of the Cebu Pen "Thriller" performance clips already has more than 9 million hits, while Michael Jackson's "Thriller' has gotten only 3 million. There have been a few more postings of the Cebu Pen performances, including other songs, ranging from Masculados' "Kaya Mo Ba Ito?" to "Hail Holy Queen" from the movie "Sister Act," with two of the inmates dressed in improvised nun's habit.

Almost as interesting as the video clips are the comments sent by viewers. Most were amused, entertained, titillated, but there are a few negative comments, mainly protesting the spectacle and wondering if the inmates were being forced to dance.

The social scientist in me is tempted to do some fancy analysis about all this, but I'm not quite in the mood for mental calisthenics today, so let me just say that beyond being entertained, I wish we could address issues of prison reform. Byron Garcia himself explains, in some of the YouTube videos, that the dancing is part of a larger program to deal with problems of gangs, gambling and boredom. "Keep the body fit to keep the mind fit," Garcia advises.

I was also struck by Wenjell explaining, in an interview, that he waited three years before he was brought to trial on drug charges, so when you watch the videos, keep that in mind, too.

Manila Pen

Now to the third Thriller. You guessed right, I'm referring to . . . now what do we call what happened in Makati? The standoff, the incident, the mutiny, the putsch, the, heaven forbid, coup attempt.

I'm appalled by what happened, partly for personal reasons. For months now, I've been trying to convince an American foundation to keep up their support for programs in the Philippines but it hasn't been easy. There was one time when I had to present the Philippine case in the United States and I thought I did a pretty good job, but the next day La Presidente had to declare a state of emergency, effectively wiping out all the good things I had said about the Philippines.

This time around, I actually had three representatives of the foundation visiting. The first few days they were here, they were treated to a typhoon, and an earthquake. Which wasn't too bad because they were impressed with what they were seeing with our program partners. Then this whatchamacallit had to happen. One of the visitors, who handles the foundation's Pakistan program, wanted to thank Trillanes and company profusely because of the way it made Pakistan look really calm and stable. Hello, Pakistan; goodbye, Philippines?

Courtesy of CNN and BBC, the world saw the government's response to the "incident"—from the armored personnel carrier moving into the hotel to the handcuffed journalists. "Overkill" has been used over and over again to describe what happened, again further reinforcing the image of a terribly insecure government.

But enough now about how other people think of us. I'd worry, too, about how Filipinos think of their government. The incident certainly exposed all the weaknesses of our political system, foremost the unpopularity of the Arroyo presidency. And while the military didn't respond to Trillanes' call, I hope Ms Arroyo and her advisers aren't being deluded into thinking they still have the overwhelming support of the soldiers. Each new scandal makes the soldiers, who're paid dismal salaries to risk life and limb out in the front lines, wonder if they're defending a country we all love, or a President we all loath.

I'd offer too, as kindly as I can, some advice for our authorities, and this is to cut down on their Thriller mania. I watched a press conference right after the standoff, where PNP Director General Avelino Razon was talking about evidence they had about a larger plot and saying they were going to crack down that night. To show they meant business, he read out from a list allegedly captured by their intelligence operatives of plotters' code names. When prodded by reporters, who had run out of anything serious to ask, he read more the code names.

The press conference was a performance that was almost as contrived as Michael Jackson's werewolf prancing around in the original video or the zombies in the Cebu Pen version. The people I was watching TV with were laughing but, as Filipinos go, the laughter was saying a lot more: there was mockery, and exasperation, expressed by expletives that sounded much like "putsch."

All said, the local Thrillers do show how we respond to adversity. I loved the way ABS-CBN's Ces Drilon quipped, "If I had known, I wouldn't have worn heels" (she was one of those media people covering the event and who got arrested, oops, "processed"). Kudos as well to the Manila Pen for moving on and rushing repairs. "Business as usual, Christmas as usual," they declared in a full-page ad. Their traditional Christmas concert pushes through on Dec. 8, at 5 p.m. at their now famous lobby.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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Wanted: copy of Baler film

I READ WITH GREAT INTEREST LITO Zulueta's review of "Los Ultimos de Filipinas" (INQUIRER, 10/8/07), a 1945 Spanish film shown recently at a Makati movie house.

Zulueta bewailed the fact that our history books seem to have ignored El Sitio de Baler (The Siege of Baler)—an incident in the Philippine-Spanish war—ironically, because we won the battle. But the siege actually did not go totally unnoticed or unsung. In 1959, my father, National Artist for Theater and Film Lamberto V. Avellana, made a documentary titled "La Campana de Baler," which went on to win the Premio Conde de Foxa at the 1959 Primer Certamen Internacional de Cine Documental Ibero-Americano y Filipino in Bilbao, Spain.

He based the film on the diary written by the commander of the beleaguered Spanish battalion, Lt. Martin Cerezo (played with great dignity by my uncle Alfred Xerez-Burgos). "La Campana de Baler" celebrated the great bravery of the Filipino soldier, while also giving due credit to the tenacity of the 50 Spaniards in the church of Baler, who were vastly outnumbered during the 337 days of the siege.

Unfortunately, the film is nowhere to be found at present. The last mention of it was a 1982 screening at the Goethe Institut. The Instituto Cervantes has asked several times for a copy from us, but, unfortunately, we did not find any in my father's office files. If anyone knows of a copy available anywhere, our family would be very grateful for the information.

—IVI AVELLANA-COSIO,
iviavellanacosio@yahoo.com

Cash gifts in the Palace and the cash-strapped girl in suicide

THE HEART-RENDING STORY OF THAT 12-year-old girl who ended her own life because of hunger and poverty could not have been placed in the INQUIRER better than being juxtaposed with the banner story about the "cash gifts" scandal. What a paradox! While supposedly responsible officials of this God-forsaken land tried to beat each other in spinning yarns about the cash gifts, a girl bowed to the stark realities of her deprived, cash-strapped existence.

In a predominantly Catholic society like ours, it is distressing enough to realize that the wealthy make more money and the poor make more babies, while the government does nothing to narrow that social divide. And the Church? Yes, the Catholic Church . . . never mind.

—FRANK E. LOBRIGO,
One Doña J. Guevara Street,
Cabagñan West, Legazpi City

A forgotten, neglected historical site in Naic

RECENTLY, I MADE A SENTIMENTAL journey to the coastal town of Naic, Cavite to visit its historic church and the old elementary school, which served as provisional quarters of the first Philippine Republic under Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, following the Tejeros convention on March 22, 1897.

Despite its age, the church, which served as refuge for displaced persons during the hostilities, is imposing and inspires reverential awe. Standing on spacious ground beside the old school, it has survived the ravages of time under the tutelage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception.

I am more concerned about its nearby parochial school which is made of local hardwood, whose size is comparable to the colleges and universities in old Europe. This is the most sought-after place in the locality and this is so because of its place in our history.

It's a lonely place; it has a very small windowless corner at the left side of the stairs serving as the janitor's tool room, which is marked "Bartolina" (temporary jail house). It is where the "Great Supremo," Andres Bonifacio, was imprisoned after his arrest following an encounter with the forces of Aguinaldo in Limbon, Indang in April 1897.

In the struggle, Ciriaco, a younger brother of Bonifacio, was killed and the Supremo sustained a severe dagger cut on his throat and right hand. In this building, the initial court martial proceedings were held, to be completed later in a house in Maragondon (the old house has been restored by the government) because of the advancing Spanish troops under the command of Capt. Gen. Camilo Polavieja.

In this respect and for posterity's sake, may I call on the high authorities in the country to upgrade and preserve the school building, including the historical "Bartolina," like it did with Jose Rizal's cell in Fort Santiago and Ninoy Aquino's cell in Laur, Nueva Ecija. In doing so, the lessons of history would be served well.

—LEON S. DEL ROSARIO,
Binakayan, Kawit, Cavite

Employer pleads for old SSS member

LAST MAY 21, 2007, I SENT A LETTER PERtaining to the Social Security System coverage of one of my employees, Gaudencia E. Baylon (SSS No. 06-1460255-1), more specifically the non-posting of contributions.

Baylon applied for retirement last March 2006. Her retirement papers were returned, purportedly because she lacked two monthly contributions. The discrepancy was a result of non-posting of contributions.

We have been requesting a rectification of her record of SSS contributions but until now nothing has been done about it.

Baylon is an old widow and is sickly. She needs the meager pension to support her. We hope and pray that she be given the necessary assistance.

—PLACIDA C. SABITSANA,
owner-manager,
Agta Catering Service,
Talahid, Almeria, Biliran 6544

RP is not overpopulated

AT FIRST GLANCE, IT WOULD SEEM THAT the Catholic Church is wrong in opposing the proposed Quezon City ordinance on reproductive health because (1) the country is overpopulated and we have to control population growth, and (2) by promoting the use of artificial contraception to avoid unwanted, mistimed pregnancies, the ordinance itself would prevent abortion.

1. The Philippines is not overpopulated. Only the National Capital Region, with its 10 million people in a land area of 620 sq km, or a population density of 16,000/sq km (2006 Philippine Statistical Yearbook) is overpopulated. The region that has the second highest population density in the island of Luzon is Calabarzon, with its population of 9.3 million occupying a land area of 16,612 sq km, its population density is 561/sq km.

Bad governance is the cause of overpopulation in the NCR. The population is overconcentrated in the NCR.

2. Most contraceptive drugs have three main effects that are achieved through different ways: preventing ovulation, preventing penetration of the ovum by the sperm, and preventing survival of the fertilized egg. Since life begins at fertilization (the advocates of artificial contraception say life begins at implantation to support their position), the Catholic Church is against artificial contraception because it believes that men/women should not take the risk of flushing out what may or does contain human life. Most, if not all, contraceptives are abortifacient or cause abortion.

By the way, in the United States alone, contraceptives gross $3 billion in annual sales.

—LELLA MIRASOL DE JESUS,
Family & Life Ministry,
Mary Mother of Good Counsel Parish,
Parañaque City

Public interest first before private profit

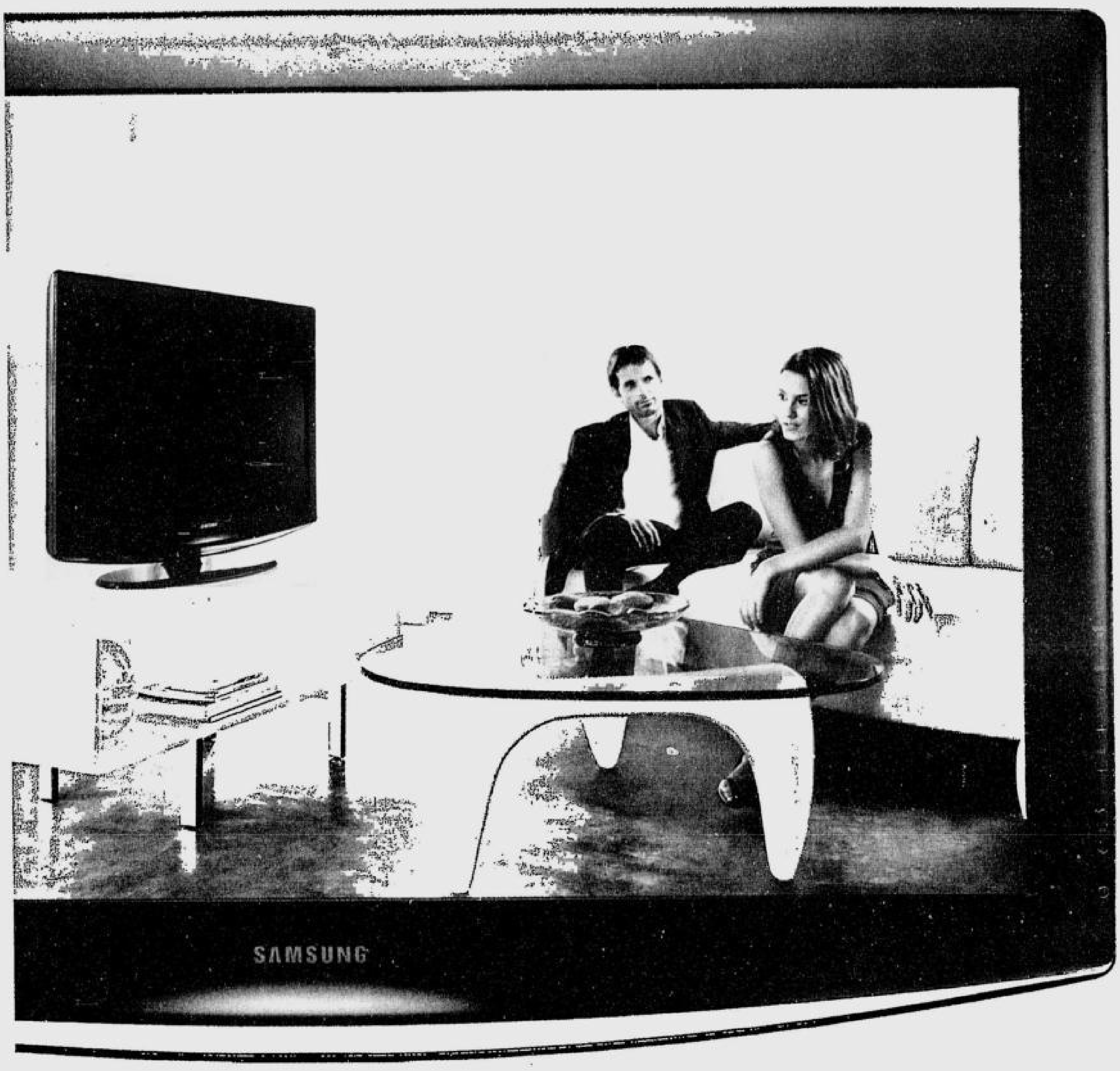
I HAD MY CAR REGISTRATION RENEWED last October at the Land Transportation Office-Aguinaldo branch which is located at 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City. It took me 30 minutes just to enter the LTO compound, and upon entering, I was informed that there was no more available parking space inside. I had no other choice but to bring my car outside and wait for two long hours just to have it tested for smoke emission in another nearby testing center. I went back to LTO-Aguinaldo for the license renewal but I suffered the same slow-moving traffic going inside the compound.

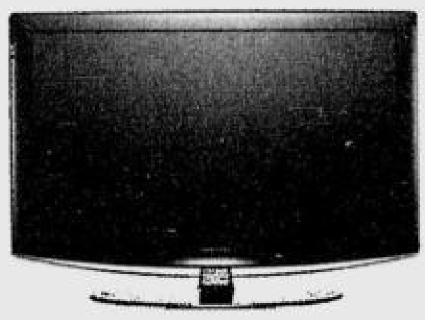
I was so disgusted upon learning that the main reason for the chaotic traffic was the ongoing construction of a smoke-emission test center inside the narrow, crowded and small LTO compound. The project occupied almost half of the public parking lot; the other half is already occupied by an existing emission test center.

I'm wondering why the LTO allowed private businesses in its compound, disregarding the public's convenience and safety. Do we have government agencies still safeguarding public interests?

I am calling the LTO, the Quezon City Hall Business Permit Section and the DTI regulatory office for emission testing centers: Please uphold public interests first and foremost.

—VICENTE A. MERCADO,
38 Camarilla St.,
Murphy, Quezon City





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Peace talks with MILF to resume soon

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COUNTRY'S largest Moro separatist group are preparing to sign off on a peace deal after years of tortuous negotiations, but that may be the easy part.

Implementing an agreement to end a conflict that has killed more than 120,000 people, displaced 2 million and stunted growth in resource-rich Mindanao will be much more difficult, both sides say.

After decades of rebellion, the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) agreed on a ceasefire in 2003, that has by and large held despite occasional flare-ups of violence.

They have negotiated alongside for setting up an ancestral homeland for 3 million Muslims that will have a large amount of autonomy but not independence.

Even the rebels say signing the deal is only a step forward.

"The problem is not as easy as some people would like to see it," Mohaqher Iqbal, the MILF's chief negotiator, told Reuters in a recent interview at a rebel camp in Mindanao.

"There are still a lot of humps and bumps in the road to peace. Granting that the two parties would be able to sign an agreement next year, there's still a very big problem on how to implement that deal."

The government has claimed an end to the rebellion on the southern third of the archipelago once—in 1996, when it signed a peace deal with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the group from which the MILF was born.

A decade later, the head of the MNLF is in jail and the group is bitterly criticizing the government for not keeping to its promises. Many MNLF members have taken up the gun again.

Iqbal criticized MNLF leaders for getting co-opted by the government, saying they weakened the struggle for self-determination by accepting official positions.

"We are not applying for any job in the government," he said. "We want to be masters of ourselves. We want to swim or drown among ourselves. We want self-governance whether it's a substate or a state within the Philippines."

Talks between the MILF and the government were expected to resume middle of this month, according to Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process who carries a Cabinet rank.

Dureza said the postponement of the talks, which was scheduled to start yesterday in Kuala Lumpur, was aimed at giving both sides ample time to prepare.

He denied reports that the cancellation of this week's meeting in Malaysia was due to the Manila Peninsula caper in Makati City last week.

Dureza said, before the caper, chief government negotiator Rodolfo Garcia, a retired general, and MILF chief negotiator Mohaqher Iqbal had already discussed and agreed in principle to move the talks middle of this month.

"It is a slow but sure process of attaining peace in Mindanao," he said. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Charlie C. Señase and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao with Reuters*

CRAB HUNT
Fishermen hunt for crabs at night during low tide in Borongan, Eastern Samar using a gas lamp and primitive tools. Crabs are trapped in sand when the tide ebbs.
ERIK ARAZAS

7-yr-old girl rescues 2 sisters from fire

STA. ROSA CITY—A SEVEN-old-girl saved two of her younger siblings from a fire on Sunday that destroyed their house in a village here.

The young heroine could not save two other siblings from the fire, but police said she had tried to.

The 30-minute fire razed the Limpiada shanty near a creek in Barangay Dila, killing Renz Vincent Limpiada, 5, and Robert Limpiada, 2.

Supt. Reymundo Oliquiano, city police chief, said two younger girls could have died in the fire, too, if not for the bravery of their eldest sister, Resabel, 7.

"Resabel saved the lives of her two younger sisters. She's really a hero," Oliquiano told the Inquirer.

Oliquiano said the charred bodies of the victims were already beyond recognition when authorities recovered them.

He said the children were already asleep at around 10 p.m. when the fire gutted their shanty.

"No other houses were destroyed during the fire as the victims' house was a few hundreds meters from their neighbor's houses," he said.

When interviewed by arson investigators, Resabel said she quickly carried her sisters, one-month-old Richel and one-year-old Sunshine, immediately after she saw the burning walls of their house.

Oiliquiano said Resabel tried to go back to rescue her two other male siblings but the fire had already swallowed the entire shanty.

He said an unattended gas burner which tipped over could have caused the fire.

Oliquiano said they might file a case against the father of the victims for criminal negligence who was supposedly in a drinking party when the fire took place.

The victims' mother, on the other hand, was in her work in a nearby shopping mall. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Kidnappers keep couple in Liguasan Marsh

COTABATO CITY—KIDNAPPERS freed Monday dawn four of the six persons they seized on Saturday afternoon in the borders of Maguindanao and North Cotabato, military officials said.

This developed as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front said it also alerted its field commanders in the marshland to arrest the suspects if they enter MILF territory.

Col. Danilo Garcia, chief of 604th Infantry Brigade, said the suspects, who earlier demanded a P10-million ransom, freed Nestor Fruto, Necelyn Fruto, Melvar Camacho and Elmarie Jams Goc-ong.

The kidnapping victims are now undergoing debriefing at Task Force Talakudong headquarters in Tacurong City.

Marvin Fruto and his girlfriend Ana Marie Superada remained captives and were believed to be taken to the vast Liguasan Marsh.

They were on board a pickup truck on their way to Davao City from Tacurong City when gunmen stopped their vehicle at about 4 p.m. They were forcibly taken to SK Pendatun town in Maguindanao en route to the Liguasan Marsh, Garcia said.

Garcia said the victims had just collected money from different stores in Tacurong for their cosmetic products.

Garcia said the armed men belonged to the group of MILF-turned-bandit Mayangcang Saguile, a known kidnap gang leader operating in the region.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, police chief in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, has formed a team to track down the suspects in the marshland, a known hideout of lawless groups, including suspected Indonesian bomber Julkifli Marwan who was involved in the rash of bombings in Mindanao.

Goltiao said a police team has been dispatched to SK Pendatun, Maguindanao where the suspects were last seen.

Eid Kabalu, MILF's civil-military affairs spokesperson, said while the MILF was still waiting for official request for help from the government peace panel, it has alerted its men "to arrest the suspects and rescue the victims if they are in our area of operation." *Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao*

ROUNDUP

Village watchman killed

TAGUM CITY—Suspected New People's Army (NPA) assassins on Nov. 29 shot and killed a village watchman involved in a gunfight that killed two rebels in Compostela town in Compostela Valley early this year, police said.

Compostela town police chief Senior Insp. Rolly Albana said Hernane Ilagan alias Totot, 47, a resident of Barangay Ngan, was rendering duty at a market fair when shot at about 2:30 p.m.

The NPA, Albana said, was holding Totot responsible for the deaths of several guerrillas. ***Frinston Lim, Inquirer Mindanao***

Suspected NPA rebel held

LUCENA CITY—A suspected New People's Army rebel operating in northern Quezon was captured by government forces on Nov. 29.

Army Maj. Randolf Cabangbang, spokesperson of the Armed Forces Southern Luzon Command, identified the captured rebel as Rosendo Mariado alias "Ka Tony."

A report said soldiers were on patrol when they came to an encampment of rebels in Sitio (sub-village) Matatambo in Pagsangahan, General Nakar town.

A short gunfight ensued, after which the insurgents retreated, leaving behind Mariado who was captured by Army soldiers. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon***

Village chief, 2 others shot dead

SORSOGON CITY—A village chief, his bodyguard and a policeman were shot dead in Donsol town on Dec. 1, barely a day after the village official assumed office.

Sorsogon police director Senior Supt. Joel Regondola said killed were Rodolfo Apuli, village chief of Barangay Gimagaan, Donsol, his bodyguard Billy Tripulca and PO3 Antonio Orosco.

Regondola said Apuli was attending the mass oath taking of barangay officials at the town's auditorium in Barangay Tres Marias when he was shot dead at around 8:45 p.m. by at least three gunmen.

Apuli is known for his crusade against commercial fishing. ***Bobby Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon***

Road equipment torched

LUCENA CITY—Suspected New People's Army rebels burned on Nov. 30 two units of heavy equipment owned by a construction firm doing the Marikina-Infanta road in northern Quezon.

Col. Jorge Segovia, head of the Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade operating in Southern Tagalog, said more than 10 rebels raided Sitio (subvillage) Cacawayan, Barangay Magsaysay in Infanta town.

The rebels, according to Segovia, torched a backhoe and bulldozer being used by D and J Builders in the construction of the proposed highway that would connect Metro Manila and northern Quezon. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon***

Ex-reb shot dead in church

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A former New People's Army (NPA) rebel was shot dead by suspected communist assassins inside a church in Abra de Ilog, Occidental Mindoro on Dec. 2, police said.

Chief Supt. Luisito Palmera, Mimaropa police director, identified the victim as former rebel Richard Perlado, 27, of Barangay Cabacao, Abra de Ilog town.

He said Perlado was inside the First United Christian Mission Church in Sitio Rayusan, Barangay Armado at around noon when two armed men approached and shot him at close range.

The victim died instantly from multiple bullet wounds in the body, Palmera said. ***Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon***

Woman, son, nephew found dead

TACLOBAN CITY—A woman, her 8-year-old son and her 15-year-old nephew were found hacked to death on Dec. 1 inside their house in Capoocan, Leyte.

Capoocan police chief Insp. George Agero identified the victims as Bibiana Lloren, 49, son John Joshua and nephew Raffy Nedruda, all residents of Barangay Balucano, a kilometer from Capoocan town proper.

Lloren's husband works in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. ***Joey A. Gabieta, Inquirer Visayas***

Tagaytay retreat for women

THE BRAHMA Kumaris will hold a retreat-dialogue for women on Dec. 8-9 at its Center for Spiritual Learning in Tagaytay City.

The fourth of its quarterly women of spirit series this year, the retreat will focus on "Celebrating the Spirit of Happiness."

The activity starts 4 p.m. Saturday and ends 4 p.m. Sunday. For details, call (02) 890-7960 or (046) 413-2128.

Benguet cold spell revives call for frost monitoring gadget

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE cold spell that is expected to last until February next year has renewed calls from the province's 13 mayors for the weather bureau to put up a frost monitoring station in the province.

The mayors admitted that the sudden drop in temperature at this time of the year was rather "early and the wind unusually cold" compared to the previous years.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Baguio City reported a dip in temperature starting last week—Nov. 30 (11.6 degrees Celsius), Dec. 1 (10.4 degrees Celsius), Dec. 2 (11.8 degrees Celsius), Dec. 3 (13.0 degrees Celsius) and Dec. 4 (13.4 degrees Celsius).

High altitude

But the temperature was lower in Benguet where most vegetable farms are raised on higher altitude.

Barometer readings by the Atok municipal agriculture office showed the following temperature readings: Nov. 30 (8 degrees Celsius), Dec. 1 (6 degrees Celsius), Dec. 2 (10 degrees Celsius) and Dec. 3 (11 degrees Celsius).

The mayors of Atok, Kibungan, Mankayan and Buguias towns said there were incidents of frost in some farms but the effects are minimal and negligible.

No cause for alarm

"For the record, the frost is not a cause for alarm. Vegetable production and harvest have remained normal and stable," said Atok Mayor Concepcion Balao.

The mayors said the frost monitoring station would help farmers in their production and harvest calendar in anticipation of the possible occurrence of frost.

Weather changes

In October, Pagasa officials told a weather forum here that the weather bureau is looking at the possibility of establishing a frost-monitoring facility in the province to study the occurrence of frost that has severely damaged vegetable farms in the past.

Dr. Nathaniel Servando, Pagasa deputy director for research and development, said the plan was an offshoot of the bureau's upgrading of its radar stations.

The frost-monitoring station, he said, formed part of Pagasa's bid to further study changing weather patterns, like El Niño and La Niña, and to suggest measures to cushion their impact on agriculture. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Soldiers, policemen capture top guerrilla leaders in N. Ecija

CAMP OLIVAS, PAMPANGA—The military and police arrested top suspected leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New People's Army (NPA) in Nueva Ecija on Nov. 28, the Army commander in Central Luzon said on Monday.

"The crackdown on communist [rebels] is part of the continuing guideline of the President (Macapagal-Arroyo)," said Maj. Gen. Juanito Gomez, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, in explaining the arrest in Talavera town of Emeterio Antalan, secretary of the CPP-NPA provincial committee, and his deputy, Rodrigo Friginal.

Asked why the 7th ID's intelligence group, the police's Criminal Intelligence and Detection Group, and the Nueva Ecija police made a late disclosure, Gomez, through spokesperson Maj. Fernando Los Bañes, said: "They were processed first."

Los Bañes said the delay was brought about by the "lengthy process" of coordination with the courts where Antalan and Friginal had pending cases.

He said Antalan and Friginal were taken on Monday to the sala of Judge Cynthia Florendo of the regional trial court in San Jose City.

The two were arrested on the bases of warrants issued by Florendo for a string of criminal cases against them.

Citing accounts of police officials, Los Bañes said the arrest was implemented through a warrant, "so there was no arbitrary detention to talk about."

Antalan and Friginal will be detained at the provincial jail. They underwent medical examinations at the San Jose General Hospital.

Their arrest came after police took Elizabeth Principe, a member of the CPP central committee, in Quezon City on Nov. 28. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

ALMOST LIKE SISTINE

The parish priest of Candon City, government officials who used their money to help in the project, and painter Redentor Castillo look up at Castillo's paintings of the Rosary's 20 Mysteries at the ceiling of the San Juan de Sahagun Parish Church in Candon, Ilocos Sur. LEONCIO BALBIN

DA starts battle vs rice black bugs in Aurora

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The Department of Agriculture on Tuesday began a five-day training in Baler, Aurora, for 35 crop protection technicians in Central Luzon in a bid to prevent the spread of rice black bugs there to the region's six other provinces.

The problem, which never struck Aurora before, was "not yet controlled," provincial agriculturist Adriano Necesito said in a phone interview.

"It's in an early stage and we are thankful that we discovered it at once," Necesito said. Lab tests done last month confirmed the pests to be rice black bugs.

Tiny and feeding on palay, these were monitored in the towns of San Luis, Ma. Aurora, Baler, Dipaculao, Dinalungan, Casiguran and Dilasag. It has spared only one Aurora town, Dingalan, which is separated by mountains from the central province.

Agriculturists from those towns, as well as from Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac and Zambales, were called to attend the training.

"After the training, they are expected to lead in the management and control of the pest," said DA regional technical chief, Eduardo Gonzales.

Aurora Gov. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo wants the technology of battling the pest brought to the level of the farmers, according to provincial administrator Alex Ocampo.

In Casiguran, where the problem was described to be worse since the bugs destroyed at least 355 hectares of rice farms, municipal agriculturist Helideliza Vicente said a state of calamity had been declared in Barangays Tinib, Calangcuasan, Lual, Esperanza, Calantas, Marikit, Tabas Esteves and Calabgan.

The farmers are tapping the town's P1.5-million calamity fund to support village-level actions to wipe out the plague, she said.

They managed to harvest only an average of 20 cavans per hectare instead of the usual 100, it was learned.

According to Vicente, light-trapping operations on Monday night proved futile. The bugs fly in large swarms only at night when a full moon shines.

The DA regional office in San Fernando, Pampanga, has sent teams to spray metarikzium, a parasite that eats the bugs.

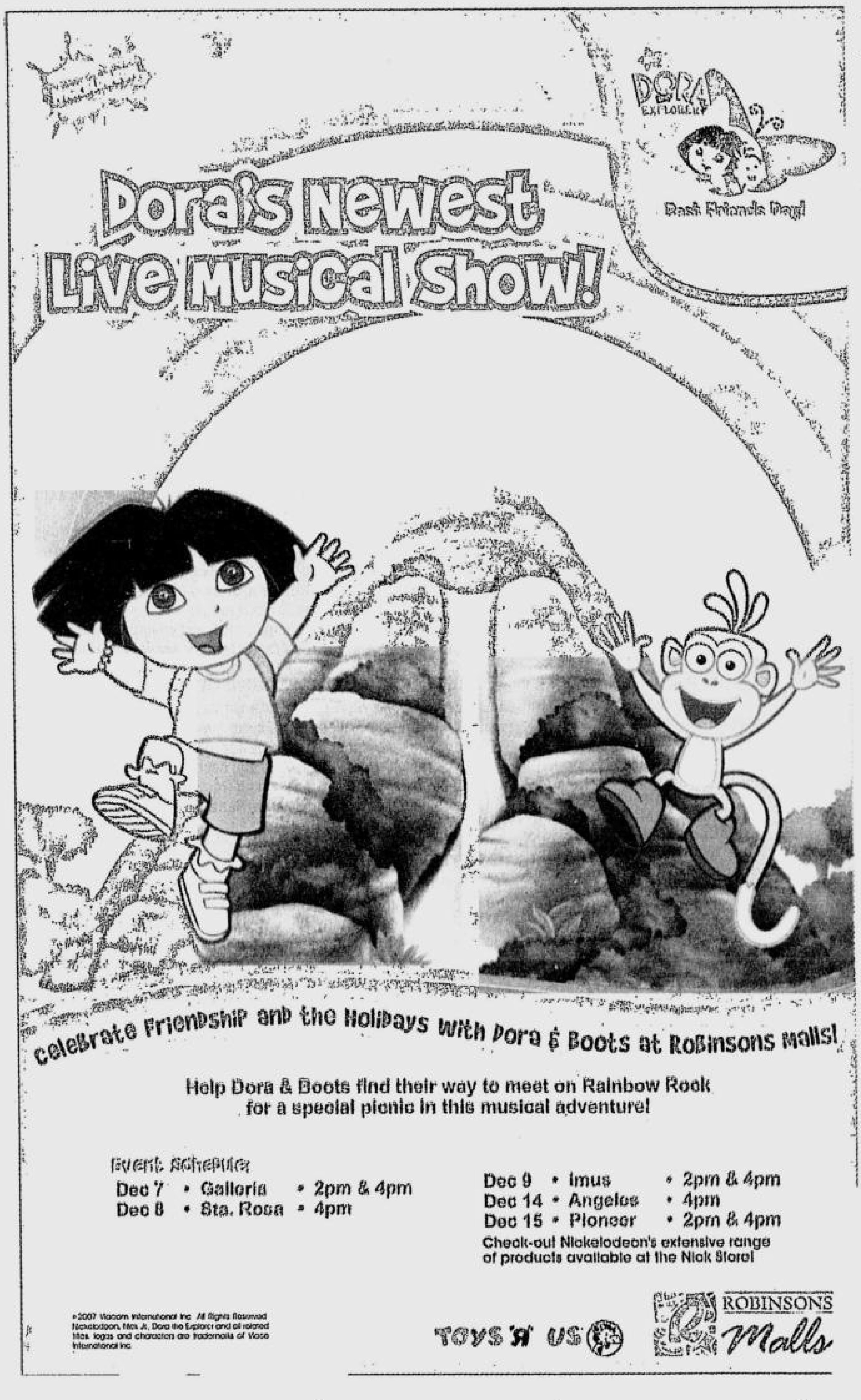
The other alternative is to drown the bugs in water, which is not easily available to some 8,000 hectares of rain-fed farms.

Last week, the DA established quarantine checkpoints in Bongabon in Nueva Ecija, and Madella and Castañeda in Nueva Vizcaya, Gonzales said. Those towns are the entry and exit points to Aurora.

The palay are washed at the gates to rid these of bugs and prevent their spread elsewhere. The DA has not yet banned rice buying in Aurora.

Nueva Ecija, the nearest province to Aurora, is being monitored, said Gonzales.

Black bugs look like beetles and smell bad. Their eggs mature in three days and even small ones suck palay stalks until these wilt and die. *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*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DOJ chief sacks prosecutor in Iloilo City close to Drilon

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez has ordered the dismissal of Iloilo City Prosecutor Efrain Baldago, a known ally of former Senate President Franklin Drilon, for graft.

But Gonzalez didn't immediately enforce his order dated Dec. 3, which was based on a decision of the Office of the President dismissing Baldago.

He has, however, already appointed an officer-in-charge to replace Baldago.

The decision, issued by the office of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on Nov. 28, affirmed the Aug. 16, 2007, resolution of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) that found Baldago liable for violating Section 7 of Republic Act No. 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.

Fighting back

The order also canceled Baldago's retirement benefits and permanently barred his reemployment in the government.

The cases stemmed from a complaint filed by retired engineer Jose Demontaño, who accused Baldago of asking for money in exchange for facilitating a case he had filed at the city prosecutor's office. Baldago has repeatedly denied the accusation.

Baldago has called the DOJ order "illegal" and has refused to turn over his position.

"Legal procedures were violated by the DOJ," Baldago told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He said he had not received a copy of both the PAGC resolution and the decision of the Office of the Executive Secretary.

Baldago pointed out that dismissal orders could only be implemented if the decision had become final and executory.

"Under our rules, I have 15 days to file a motion for reconsideration," he said.

He said he also found it irregular that the DOJ order naming his replacement was drafted ahead of the order that implemented the dismissal.

DOJ Order No. 970 designated assistant prosecutor Peter Baliao as officer-in-charge of the city prosecutor's office while DOJ Department Order No. 971 ordered the implementation of Baldago's dismissal.

The two orders were both dated Dec. 3.

Gonzalez said he would not implement the order until Baldago has filed a motion for reconsideration and if this was denied.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
3rd Flr., Andenson Bldg. II, Brgy. Parian, Calamba City
December 05, 2007

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s.

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
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(PDI–December 5, 2007)

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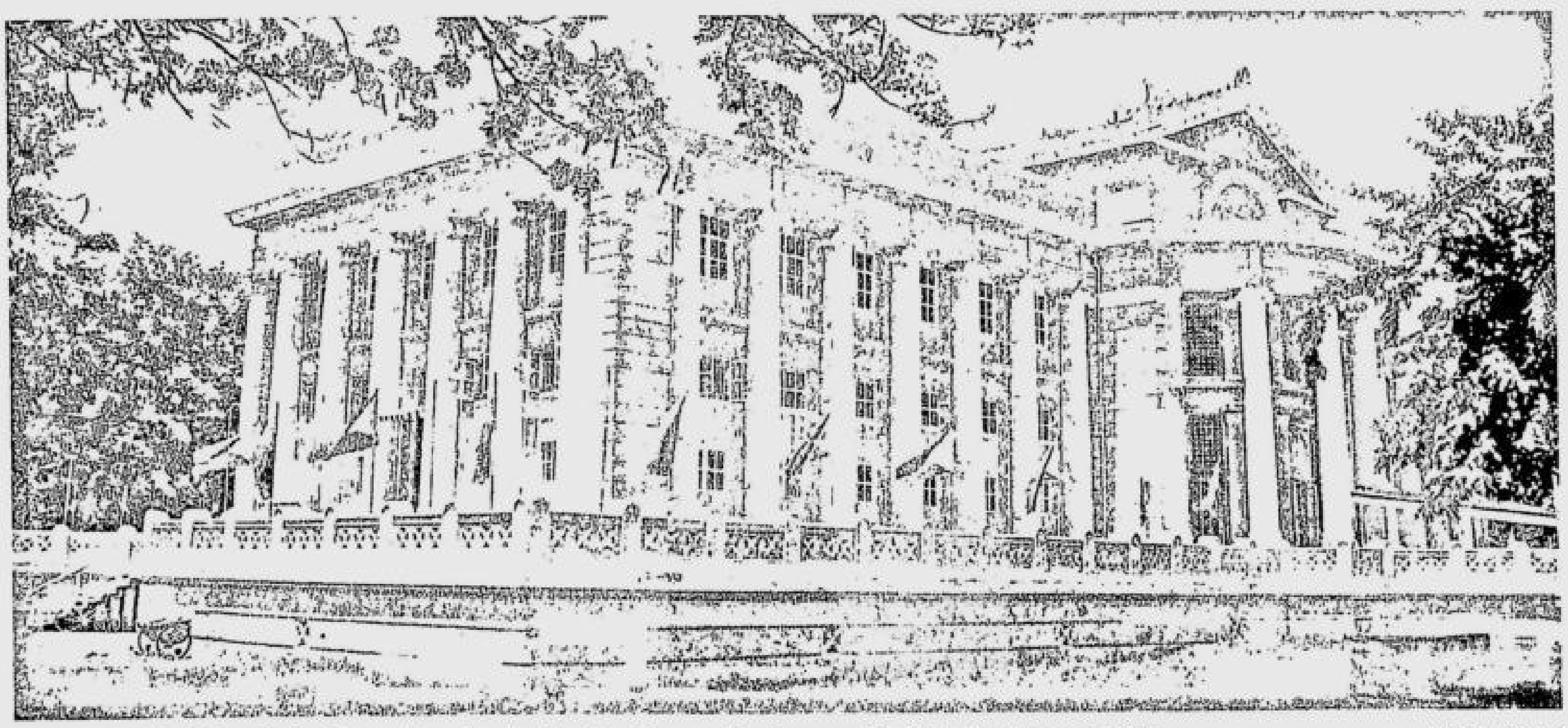
Pangasinan still seeking 'special' day

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Lingayen, Pangasinan



THE PROVINCIAL capitol of Pangasinan is a stately structure on the shores of the historic Lingayen Gulf.

RAY B. ZAMBRANO

PANGASINENSES NOW WANT TO KNOW. Concern is growing that despite the observance of a yearly provincial holiday and the celebration of the Pistay Dayat (Sea Festival), they have yet to celebrate a "real" Pangasinan Day.

"It's time we give importance to a great province and for Pangasinenses to express their pride and sense of belonging to a distinct group of Filipinos," said Verna Perez, provincial board secretary.

"It would be nice to have a day when we can encapsulate and highlight everything that makes Pangasinan special—from its historical beginning to the many achievements of its people and as a government unit," Perez said.

Since 1989, Pangasinenses have been celebrating Nov. 13 as "Pangasinan Day." But Republic Act No. 6271, which was signed into law by then President Corazon Aquino, declared Nov. 13 a special nonworking public holiday in Pangasinan in celebration of the birth anniversary of the late Speaker Eugenio Perez, a native of San Carlos City.

Starting next year, the province will also be celebrating Jan. 9 as Veterans' Day, a special nonworking holiday in commemoration of the American liberation forces' Lingayen Gulf landings in 1945.

Anniversary bonus

Without a founding date, provincial government employees have also been deprived of anniversary bonuses since 1997.

Under Circular No. 65 of the Department of Budget and Management, local government employees are entitled to a P3,000 anniversary bonus every five years, if their local governments have existed for at least 15 years.

"But since we do not have a founding date, we have not been able to grant this bonus to our employees," Hilaria Claveria, provincial budget officer, said.

No record

According to the circular, she said, the founding year of local governments "shall be based on authentic documents showing their establishment, or on the enabling act of law creating such localities."

Perez said her office had tried two years ago to do a research on the province's founding date.

"We wrote the National Historical Institute then, but we were told that there was no record in the national archives. *Wala daw talaga* (There was really nothing there)," Perez said.

She said the NHI had advised her instead to do a research in Spain. At the start of his term in July, Gov. Amado Espino Jr. had floated the creation of a research group that would go to Spain, but local historian Restituto Basa said this might "a futile exercise."

Basa said that in the late 1960s, when Cipriano "Tito" Primicias Jr. was governor, he had asked then Philippine Ambassador to Spain Luis Gonzales, who is from Rosales town, to look for the province's founding date in the Spanish archives.

"The ambassador found nothing," Basa, one of Primicias' former assistants, said.

He said it might already be impossible to identify an exact date because, he noted, Pangasinan already existed as a political entity even before the Spaniards came. "We antedated the Spanish conquest," he said.

Alcaldia mayor

In her book, "Pangasinan 1572-1800," historian Rosario Mendoza Cortes said Pangasinan was among those organized into political subdivisions, known as *alcaldias mayores*, in 1580 when Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa was then the country's governor-general.

"With the organization of Pangasinan into an *alcaldia mayor*, Lingayen must have been designated as the capital for it was where the *alcalde mayor* resided," Cortes said.

But accounts from other sources said it was only in 1611 when Pangasinan was made into a province, comprising Zambales and some areas of La Union and Tarlac.

If it is impossible to find an exact date, the provincial board might as well adopt an ordinance to recognize Jan. 1 as Pangasinan Day, Basa said. "This is based on the assumption that the province was organized ahead of Lingayen, its capital, which was founded on Jan. 6," he said.

The blossoming of Baboo

By Elizabeth Lolarga
Contributor

WRITER-PAINTER Baboo Mondoñedo speaks at the opening of her exhibit.

ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY

BEFORE SHE TOOK up the brush in July, writer Baboo Mondoñedo had been seeing an acupuncturist for treatment of her hypertension. The doctor said her head had a soft spot that indicated that "lots of energy were bottled up" and that she needed a certain "passion" to release them.

One day, friend Khalida Azimi persistently invited her to join a painting session. "Come for coffee if you don't want to paint. I'll have you picked up, and you can go home anytime," the invitation went.

DAYTOY TI AMIANAN

With the bonus of seeing fellow writer Mariel Francisco in the group, Mondoñedo, who was suffering from headache, decided to go. She found herself enjoying drawing a straight line and a circle.

Before long, the pain in her head disappeared. The following week, she joined another art session under Rinna Soriano.

Back home in Baguio City, she inquired immediately from Tam-awan Village, a community of artists, if it could send a private art tutor. Once or twice a week, she met with Patrick Palasi for watercolor lessons.

The newfound passion freed her of headaches and pains at the back of her neck until she felt that she no longer needed to see the acupuncturist.

First solo show

Painting keeps her focused and still, like the Zen sittings she has been doing for years. She was able to collect 30 paintings for a first solo show titled "Rugi" (Ilocano word for "beginning"), which runs until Dec. 14 at Café by the Ruins on Chuntug Street in Baguio.

Her landscapes reflect her love for travel. There are views of Baguio City, Kibungan in Benguet, Sadanga in Mt. Province, where she attended a mass wedding in which over a hundred carabaos were killed for the feast, Sipalay City in Negros Occidental, Dingalan in Aurora, Palawan, Sabah, Borneo and Sarawak in Malaysia, Colorado in the US, among the many places.

Mondoñedo, a Baguio Midland Courier columnist, vice chair of the Baguio-Benguet Citizens Press Council and vice president of the Baguio Writers Group, said painting had given her "a new life" and equipped her with "new eyes."

"The colors are more alive. Maybe, I've become more observant. I used to go to galleries whenever I traveled, but now I go nearer a work of art and take longer in looking at it."

She did not think she would be good with her hands, which she described as "the stiffest."

"I never worked well with them, whether it was crochet, sewing or anything that needed detailing," she said.

Mondoñedo now fully enjoys the "sensuous, exhilarating movements of the brush" to the point that painting has become "the highlight of my day, and I can work into the night."

"Before I discovered this, I was always going out of the house looking for something. Now, the best place is home. This is where my heart is," she said.

She has infected her grandchildren, Manolo and Ines Angara, with her fervor that when they see her coming with painting materials, they cannot contain themselves.

Her opinion of artists changed, too. In the past, she and the late Christine Arvisu, a partner of the café, used to joke in private about artists being "weirdos, characters and a different kind of people."

Speaking for herself, a history graduate of Assumption College who almost finished an interior design course at the Philippine School of Interior Design, Mondoñedo said it did have to be that way.

A guest at her exhibit said, "You should do something so the value of your work will go up."

"What?" she asked. "Die?"

"No," came the quick retort. "Do something scandalous!"

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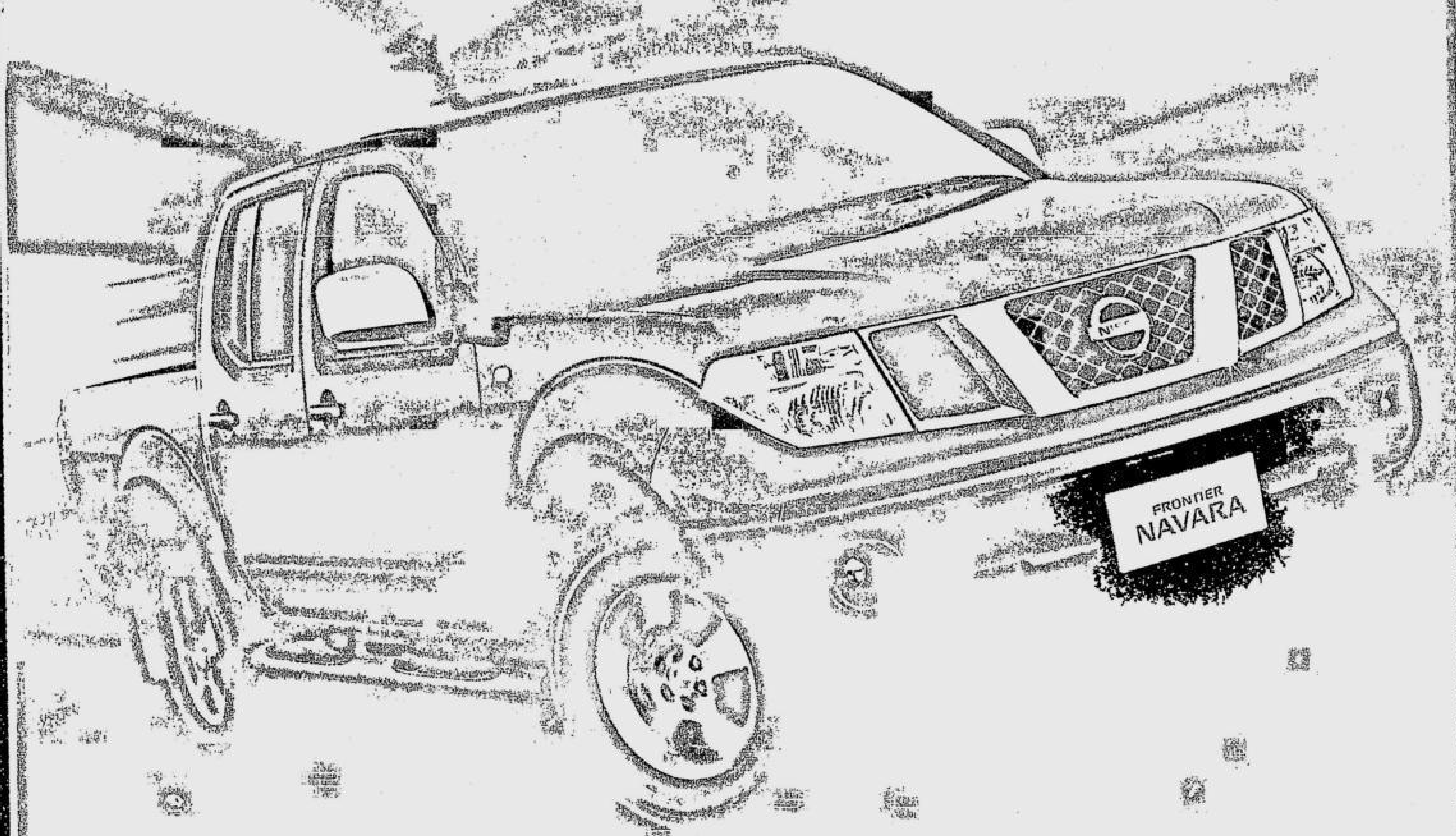

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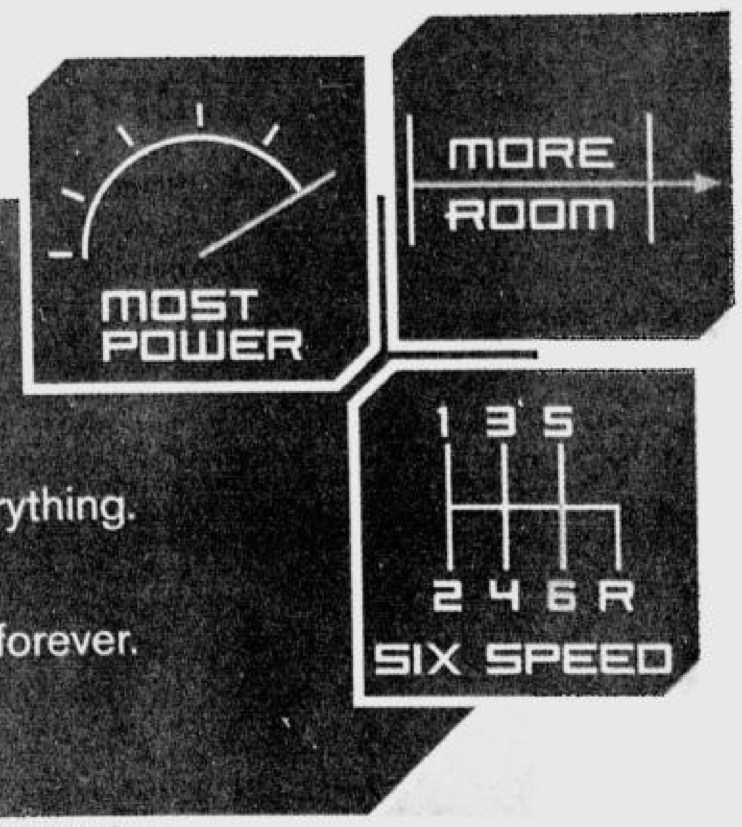

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Soldiers, cops' after-action report: Next time it's over in 1, 2 hours

By Nikko Dizon

MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICIALS in the National Capital Region (NCR) yesterday vowed to conduct "an easier and quicker" response to crisis situations such as last week's takeover of the Peninsula Manila hotel.

"It should only be in a few—not five hours—but in one or two hours if something like that happens again. We will engage them immediately. We would like to develop that capability and we will do this jointly," said Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa.

The chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines NCR Command (NCRCom) spoke at a joint press conference with officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Mesa said while the police and military were praised for the swift resolution of the Peninsula siege, authorities were still "not contended" with it, stressing that they could have done "much, much better."

Mesa and the PNP, represented by Chief Superintendents Luizo Ticman, director of the Southern Police District (SPD), and Isagani Cuevas, deputy director for operations of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), met yesterday to review their response to the siege.

Mesa said that by identifying the authorities' strengths, weaknesses and lapses, "we will be able to hit them much earlier" should another similar incident take place.

Cuevas said the quick response time of authorities would already include negotiations for a surrender.

"We will put pressure on (them) so that they will surrender. And if they will not surrender, we will uphold the law and do the best that we could do," Mesa said.

He would not categorically answer reporters who asked if a quick resolution to a conflict meant an assault.

"It would depend on the situation," Mesa said.

Asked what scenario or situation would warrant an assault, Mesa replied: "If there are hostages and lives are in peril."

Back to normal soonest

Mesa said the authorities had resolved to put a quick end to conflicts to allow people and businesses to return to normal immediately.

"*Kung may problema, huwag na patagalin pa* (If there's a problem, we shouldn't make it linger)," Mesa said.

The NCRCom chief stressed that quick and decisive action did not mean overkill on the part of authorities.

Mesa said the authorities would only put in "enough, sizable force."

"If the enemy knows you are of superior strength, they will give up. It's like in boxing. If your opponent knows you're stronger, he will not fight you anymore. If he knows you're just of equal strength, he will still put up a fight," Mesa said in Filipino.

US assured GMA of support as she faced uprising, US ambassador says

THE US AMBASSADOR TO THE Philippines yesterday said that she called President Macapagal-Arroyo several times to assure her of America's backing during last week's failed coup attempt.

Washington would not support any extraconstitutional change of government, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said, adding that Thursday's takeover by rebel troops and civilian backers of the Peninsula Manila hotel at the Makati financial district endangered innocent civilians and businesses.

Kenney said the US government was "delighted" that the seven-hour hotel siege by rebel soldiers ended without bloodshed.

Disturbing

"No, we do not support extraconstitutional means to change government, in the Philippines or anywhere else in the world," the ambassador told reporters after turning over utility boats to the Philippine Navy in a Manila ceremony.

"I think it's always disturbing when you see people behaving contrary to the rule of law and constitutional authority," she said.

As the uprising raged, Kenney said she separately spoke to Ms Arroyo, her defense secretary, and the chiefs of military and police "all to tell them we're a strong ally and partner."

"Absolutely, we remain a very, very strong ally," the ambassador stressed. "We want this country to move forward."

Ms Arroyo, a staunch backer of Washington's global war on terrorism, has survived three previous coup attempts and three opposition impeachment bids over corruption scandals and human rights abuses during her seven tumultuous years in power. *AP*

Senate to investigate 'illegal' 5-hr curfew

From page A1

would conduct the inquiry upon completion of deliberations on the 2008 national budget.

The hearing would be undertaken in order to craft a law that would seek to prevent a repeat of the curfew clamped from midnight to 5 a.m. following the seven-hour hotel incident on Nov. 29.

The resolution said the police action lacked legal and constitutional basis.

"The curfew was openly violative of the fundamental rights of the people under the (1987) Freedom Constitution's Bill of Rights," said Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan who initiated Senate Resolution No. 233.

"We cannot tolerate this blatant disregard of the Constitution and the rule of law," he said in a statement yesterday.

He said the police power of the state, which Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno cited to justify the curfew, "can only be used by the executive through a valid delegated legislative authority."

Pangilinan said that although the curfew was an accomplished fact, it was something that the Senate could not simply gloss over.

"If we turn another blind eye to this, we might wake up with more serious violations to our liberties," Pangilinan said.

Those who signed the resolution were Senate President Manuel Villar, President Pro Tempore Jinggoy Estrada, Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Senators Rodolfo Biazon, Benigno Aquino III, Manuel Roxas II, Panfilo Lacson, Loren Legarda, Jamby Madrigal, Alan Cayetano, Francis Escudero, Richard Gordon and Gregorio Honasan.

'Illegal check-in'

Also at the Senate, Cayetano yesterday said he found no crime of rebellion in Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV's actions on Nov. 29, when he walked out of his coup d'etat trial in a Makati courtroom, marched on the Peninsula, took over the hotel with armed rebel soldiers and civilians, and demanded President Macapagal-Arroyo's ouster.

"He's guilty of trying to escape and he's guilty of illegal check-in," Cayetano told reporters.

"He did not go through the counter before he checked in," Cayetano said with a grin. "So far, whether or not we believe in what he did, there was no violence there."

"He did not take hostages, he did not fight back. I am still looking for the elements of rebellion and coup d'etat," he added.

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From The Pen to nat'l penitentiary

From page A1

the safety and security of the accused, and decided that the best way to secure them while they are awaiting the trial of their rebellion case is to house them in Muntinlupa," Corpus said.

Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco said the motion for transfer would be filed today before the Makati RTC. He said state prosecutors were prepared to go all the way to the Supreme Court should the lower court deny the motion.

Velasco also said there was "still a presumption of innocence" of all the accused despite their planned transfer to the state penitentiary.

But Trillanes' lawyer, Reynaldo Robles, was quick to brand the transfer "an act of harassment" by the government.

"The excuse that the issue is one of security is lame and unacceptable," he told the INQUIRER. "[The accused] are being detained in the custodial center at the heart of Camp Crame, the headquarters of the Philippine National Police, with hundreds of troops inside. It is really lame of them to proclaim they can't secure [the accused] there."

Peace of mind

Robles said he and the other defense lawyers were equally prepared to fight it out in the high court: "Only the Supreme Court can change the venue of a criminal case. In that case, we will oppose it all the way to the Supreme Court, and we will challenge the wisdom of the move. The [NBP] is not under the jurisdiction of the Makati court."

Velasco said state prosecutors also planned to hold the hearings in the rebellion case in Muntinlupa to ensure their "peace of mind."

"We want to make sure there will be no walkout, no assassination attempt against us," he said.

He added that the planned transfer to Muntinlupa would result in "savings" for the government because expenses for the escorts of the accused would be trimmed.

Velasco clarified that the four accused civilians who had been released "in recognizance" to other civilians—former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Infanta Bishop Julio Labayen, writer-actress Bibeth Orteza and former UP president Francisco Nemenzo—would remain out of detention.

"We think the four have been released to the custody of responsible civilians. We know they are not a flight risk," Velasco said.

Corpus said the accused would not be "mixed in" with convicts at the NBP. "They will have a holding area. They will be housed in one compound but will not be sharing the same cells."

No objection

Col. Pedro Herrera-Davila of the Armed Forces' Judge Advocate General's Office (Jago) said the military had no objection to the planned transfer.

He said that when Trillanes and soldiers charged with coup d'etat walked out of the Makati court proceedings, the Jago considered them "escapees" from military control.

With Trillanes and company "rearrested" by civilian authorities, the PNP has jurisdiction over them now, he said.

"To whoever arrested them now, the AFP is prepared to grant full cooperation," Herrera-Davila said.

The NBP is managed by the Bureau of Corrections, which is under the Department of Justice.

The other day, the DOJ filed charges of rebellion and inciting to rebellion against Trillanes, Lim and 34 others. It ordered the release of 14 others, mostly civilians, pending preliminary investigation.

Military cleared

The AFP's National Capital Region Command (NCRCom) has cleared its soldiers of collusion with Trillanes and company.

"As far as we know, nobody joined [the Trillanes-Lim group]," Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa, the NCRCom chief, said yesterday at a press conference.

Nonetheless, Mesa said, a board of inquiry composed of five senior military officials had been formed to look into the possible lapses of the platoon of NCRCom soldiers that allowed the Trillanes-Lim group to walk out of the courtroom of Judge Oscar Pimentel and march for nearly two kilometers to the Peninsula at the corner of Ayala and Makati Avenues.

The NCRCom is assigned to secure the courtroom and the vicinity of the Makati City Hall during the hearings of Trillanes and the junior officers on trial for the daylong Oakwood mutiny in July 2003.

"We would like to have the complete picture and be able to identify how it happened. Those who did their job to prevent [the walkout], they should be commended. [As for] those who fell short of expectations, appropriate measure should be properly undertaken," Mesa said.

Firearms at toilets

He said the results of the inquiry would form part of the NCRCom review of the rules and procedures in handling military detainees.

Mesa said the NCRCom soldiers at the Nov. 29 hearing were unarmed because Judge Pimentel had disallowed firearms in the courtroom.

"We were confident that there would be no firearms in the building because this was the order of the judge. We thought the building administrator [of the Makati City Hall] strictly carried this out. But someone pointed a gun at one of our men during the walkout," Mesa said.

Military and police said the firearms used by the soldiers seemed to have come from the toilets at the 14th floor of the City Hall.

Mesa said the other NCRCom soldiers did not stop the Trillanes-Lim group from walking to the hotel to prevent "unnecessary collateral damage."

"Remember, when [the soldiers with the Trillanes-Lim group] came out of [City Hall], some of them were already armed. There were important personalities there too, like Vice President Guingona. There were civilians. So if [the NCRCom soldiers] will engage, definitely a lot of people will be [caught in the crossfire]," he said.

Mesa said NCRCom soldiers found accountable for lapses could face sanctions. He said the board's findings and recommendations would be "internal" to the NCRCom. *With reports from Nikko Dizon and Tina G. Santos*

NBI looking at Binay role

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION is looking into the possible involvement of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay in the takeover of portions of the Peninsula Manila hotel by the group of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV.

NBI Director Nestor Mantaring said the inclusion of Binay, the president of the United Opposition, in the inquiry stemmed from the discovery that two of his security officers—former Staff Sgt. Elmer Colon and Sonny Madarang—had joined Trillanes' group.

Madarang has been arrested by police; Colon remains at large.

But when asked if the NBI would invite Binay for questioning, Mantaring said: "It's too early to say.

"Right now, we're conducting an investigation of personalities who were not among those charged by the police. We're getting statements from people who may have witnessed and may shed light on the incident."

In a press conference yesterday, PNP Director General Avelino Razon said there was "no direct evidence" to prove Binay's complicity.

Razon said Colon, the man caught in photographs and TV footage dressed in fatigues and wearing a wig, was indeed an employee of the Makati City government. But he said this did not mean Binay was involved in the failed revolt.

Mantaring said the NBI had asked the Peninsula management to provide the bureau a copy of the closed-circuit television tapes, as well as the guest list, "to determine who were staying in or made reservations at the hotel the day before and [on Nov. 29 itself]."

DOJ chief: PNP can't force ABS-CBN to give raw video footage

From page A1

operate, maybe they're hiding something."

Spreading rebels' cause

Gonzalez said the Arroyo administration had no desire to quarrel with the media. He reiterated President Macapagal-Arroyo's order to government officials "not to take any action against the media."

But he chided broadcast journalists for airing interviews with rebel leader Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV for what seemed to Gonzalez like "every two minutes."

He claimed the journalists were providing "indirect aid (to) the cause of the rebels by propagating the political propaganda of the rebels."

"But there's no point in quarreling with the media because you can strike back with your pens and microphones," he said.

Contempt option

PNP spokesperson Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said the police could go as far as asking the court to cite ABS-CBN for contempt should it refuse to heed the police subpoena to bring to the CIDG office today a DVD copy of its footage of the Peninsula confrontation.

"A subpoena is different from an ordinary letter asking them to provide us some raw footage," Pagdilao told INQUIRER editors.

"If they will not honor a subpoena, we can go to court to ask the court to cite them for contempt. The court can find them in contempt for not honoring a subpoena ... It's not us that will hold them in contempt. It's still the court," he said.

ABS-CBN has until today to comply with the order issued by CIDG head Director Edgardo Doromal.

"They said they will write us tomorrow. Either they bring it or they write us tomorrow," said Virgilio Pablico, CIDG chief legal officer.

"If they don't [and they only give us the edited footage shown on air], we will ask them to authenticate the on-the-air footage. It may not suffice. We will not push. We will just ask the court to issue a subpoena for them to submit them (the raw footage)."

Understanding with ABS-CBN

Pagdilao and Pablico spoke to INQUIRER editors after a meeting with ABS-CBN officials, where the network thought it had reached an understanding with them about the wanted video footage.

"I thought we came to an understanding that we will authenticate the ANC footage ... That's no problem at all," said ABS-CBN news and current affairs chief Maria Ressa.

"They seemed happy with the fact that we would authenticate [their copy] of the ANC footage," said Ressa, when reached by phone.

She said she had explained to the PNP officials that it was ABS-CBN policy not to release unaired footage because of ethical considerations, saying to do so would be "like giving a reporter's notes" to the police.

"We told them they also need to do their investigation so that they will not put us in an ethical situation with the people we cover ... People might not want to be interviewed anymore," Ressa said.

Not a suspect

PNP officials stressed ABS-CBN was sent the subpoena not because it was being considered a suspect but because the footage taken by the network would help in the investigation.

"We could not have charged the civilians without the ANC footages. The reason why there were 14 who were released, it's because these 14 did not appear in the footages," said Pablico.

He was referring to the civilians who were released and spared from the rebellion charges filed against Trillanes and 35 other people, including Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and former Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

"It (the footage shown on air) helped the investigators identify the civilian support, identify what they were doing. So these ANC (ABS-CBN News Channel) footages were actually evidence that helped the prosecutors come up with a resolution against the civilians," Pablico said.

"It was not us investigating ABS-CBN for any anomaly or wrongdoing. It is a subpoena asking them to produce to us the raw footages."

Other networks subpoenaed

Neither was ABS-CBN being singled out as the CIDG had also sent subpoenas to television networks GMA 7 and ABC 5, he said. There was, however, more to see in the ABS-CBN tapes as it had the widest television coverage of the event.

"We have sent letters to all media outfits who were there to cover the incident. We have sent letters to Channels 7, 9 and 5. Others will follow," Pablico said in a separate talk with reporters at Camp Crame.

He added that the CIDG had subpoena powers under Republic Act No. 5750, or the law governing CIDG agents.

"(The power) is deemed necessary to produce said material evidence to aid our investigators in the identification of personalities involved as shown on national television and in ascertaining the proper chronological sequence of the events that unfolded before and after the siege," Pablico said.

Obstruction of justice

Pablico told Camp Crame reporters that failure to comply with the subpoena could result in either contempt or obstruction of justice charges.

He said the CIDG was not bent on "curtailing press freedom and will always be a friend of the tri-media in purveying news."

PNP Director General Avelino Razon also said the police "are not singling out ABS-CBN," explaining that the word "command" in the notice sent to the network was pro forma.

"We ask for the understanding of our friends in media. We have no intention to draw media into a legal confrontation," Razon said.

The Jakarta-based Confederation of Asean Journalists (CAJ) yesterday backed the move of the National Press Club to file a complaint against law authorities who ordered the detention of journalists who covered the Peninsula siege.

Support for journalists

In a statement released by the NPC, Abdul Razak, permanent secretary of the CAJ board of directors, said that "press freedom is universally accepted as citizens' right for free expression over public policies that may affect people's right for justice and freedom of expression."

The CAJ, an association of national media organizations in Southeast Asia, added that it "fully supports the actions taken by the NPC to defend press freedom."

"Journalists are expected to do their professional duties to report and question public policies on behalf of the people in their country," Razak said in an e-mail to NPC president Roy Mabasa, who represents the club on the CAJ board.

On Monday, the NPC filed a complaint with the Commission on Human Rights against PNP officers for alleged violation of human rights when they handcuffed and detained print and broadcast journalists who were at the Peninsula at the time of the siege.

The CAJ board is composed of the heads of national media organizations in Thailand, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

PNP probing leftist links

By Alcuin Papa

TWO CIVILIANS ARRESTED in the wake of the Nov. 29 standoff at the Peninsula Manila have links to the Left, Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon said yesterday.

According to Razon, one of the civilians, Myrna Buendia, was a common-law wife of Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison, and the other, Leoder de la Cruz, was the son of Nilo de la Cruz, founder of the Alex Boncayao Brigade.

The two are still being held at Camp Crame, and have been charged, along with 34 other civilians and soldiers, with rebellion, a nonbailable offense.

Razon said police were still trying to determine the actual participation of Buendia and De la Cruz in the failed revolt of Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

But he said the links between the Left and those who spearheaded the standoff at the Peninsula were "active."

Sison is living in exile in the Netherlands. Nilo de la Cruz split with Sison's faction in the CPP in the late 1980s.

Spain's king hail GMA, RP as human rights, democracy defender

From page A1

was "applauded by the international community."

A Spanish-Filipino national, Francisco Juan "Paco" Larrañaga, was among the beneficiaries of the Philippine decision in 2006 to scrap capital punishment. He was convicted in 2004 of the kidnap-rape slay of the sisters Marijoy and Jacqueline Chiong in Cebu City.

The Spanish king's tribute to the Philippines contrasted with the Arroyo administration's tarnished image among human rights groups at home and abroad as a result of continuing killings of political militants, which have remained largely unsolved.

The administration's image further suffered last week when the Philippine police detained dozens of journalists who refused to obey their order to withdraw from the Peninsula Manila hotel during an assault on a group of rebel soldiers.

Model for Asians

Present during Monday's dinner were Queen Sofia de Grecia, the crown prince and princess, select members of the Spanish royal court, Spanish government officials, and members of Ms Arroyo's delegation, led by Senators Edgardo Angara, Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Juan Miguel Zubiri.

The Spanish monarch described the establishment of diplomatic relations between Spain and the Philippines 60 years ago as a "model which other countries in the (Asian) region have fortunately adopted."

Speaking in Spanish, the king said the model was based on justice, liberty and respect for human rights.

400 years of friendship

Referring to the problem of terrorism and insurgency, King Carlos said the Philippines, and Spain—both victims of terror attacks—were united against common threats which required both bilateral and multilateral action.

He talked about cooperation with the Philippines in the fight against terror, "drawing on all the instruments of the rule of law."

Ms Arroyo spoke in Spanish after the king's remarks. At presstime, no translated copy had been given to Filipino reporters covering her state visit.

King Carlos cited the friendship between the countries "which has lasted more than four centuries."

"In fact, some of the beautiful pages of Spanish literature were written in the Philippines," he said.

A second home

King Carlos also talked about Filipino national hero Jose Rizal, whose martyrdom triggered the Filipino uprising that eventually ended the 300-year Spanish colonization of the island archipelago.

He said the country that Rizal had described as the "Pearl of the Orient" had been "privileged by nature."

Speaking at the Madrid City Hall, where she accepted the symbolic key to the city, Ms Arroyo talked of Spain as a second home to 50,000 Filipinos. She spoke of the "deepness of the historical and cultural connection shared by Filipinos and Spanish people."

Ms Arroyo noted that in the 19th century, Madrid had attracted talented Filipinos, such as Rizal.

She said it was in Madrid that Rizal started his novel, "Noli Me Tangere," which inspired the Philippine Revolution.

Luna opus

"It was also here in Madrid that our great artists, Juan Luna and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo, brought honor to the Filipino community, when they were still unknowns, during the celebration of the National Fine Arts Exposition," Ms Arroyo said.

As a result, the Spanish Senate took care of the Luna masterpiece, "Combate Naval de Lepanto," which now adorns the halls of the Senate, alongside the masterpieces of great Spanish artists.

Ms Arroyo viewed the giant oil on canvass painting, completed in 1887, when she visited the Spanish Senate building on Monday.

Agreements signed

Prior to the dinner, the Philippines and Spain signed agreements to increase cooperation in agriculture and fisheries, education, sports and culture, tourism and renewable energy such as solar and wind.

Trade Secretary Peter Favila said some deals involving port operations, a brewery and new hotels could be finalized before the end of the state visit.

Spain is the largest overseas development fund source in Europe for the Philippines, and ranks 31st on the country's list of trading partners.

THE ALBAY DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Aksyon ng Pinoy para sa Kalikasan

As stewards and stakeholders of the Philippine ecosystem and as children of Mother Earth, we declare the following premises as basis for common ground and collective action:

- Climate change is one of the most pervasive and pernicious threats facing Mother Earth;
- The 2007 Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concludes that the "warming of the earth's climate system is unequivocal" which has been attributed to the rise in human-induced greenhouse gas emissions in the last 150 years, primarily from highly industrialized and industrializing countries;
- The changing climate has adverse impacts on natural, economic, and social systems which affect our national aspiration to eradicate poverty and attain sustainable development for the present and future generations;
- The Philippines being an archipelagic country is highly vulnerable to climate risks and weather disturbances such as tropical cyclones and prolonged droughts resulting to social and ecological devastation, and economic loss;
- Policy makers and scientists here and abroad emphasize the need to institutionalize climate change adaptation measures to address climate risks expeditiously;
- The government has adopted the Philippine Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goal for environmental sustainability; has created the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), the Inter-Agency Committee on Climate Change (IACCC), the Advisory Council on Climate Change (ACCC), and the Presidential Task Force on Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation (PTFCC), and the President has made a Green Philippines as one of the "8 in 8" priorities;
- Action on climate change is a civic duty of all citizens. It offers our society vast opportunity for social inclusion and political harmony. Thus, we must recognize the intrinsic primacy of local communities in the implementation of adaptation programs to sustain efficacy and enhance their efficiencies;

Therefore, we, the participants, hereby commit ourselves to the following plan of action:

- To work for the passage of a policy prioritizing climate change adaptation in the national agenda, thereby directing all behavior of its instruments and agents through programs, projects, budgets, grants of license and franchise, to be consistent and compatible with such policy;
- To promote "climate-proofing" development through genuine multi-sectoral participation, particularly in: 1) the on-going formulation of a national strategic framework on climate change adaptation, 2) the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of national and local development plans, programs, fiscal policies, and budgets, and 3) implementation of international treaties and trade agreements;
- To advocate the creation of oversight bodies on climate change adaptation in the Senate and the House of Representatives as regular standing committees;
- To promote the mainstreaming through the DILG, the leagues of local government units, and in possible partnership with regional councils for sustainable development, in the adoption of local policy and programs for climate change adaptation by the local government units;
- To call for the integration in the basic education curriculum by the Department of Education (DepEd), in tertiary courses by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and in vocational and technical courses by the TESDA;
- To promote research and extension work on climate change adaptation through government agencies, research institutions and the academe;
- To support the development and wider use of the country's abundant renewable energy sources to promote resiliency and growth in our communities;
- To strongly urge the provision of increased allocations for climate change adaptation in the budgets of relevant government agencies, GOCCs and GFIs
- To urge the creation of a climate change adaptation fund which may be sourced from existing taxes, proceeds from the privatization of government properties, official development assistance, grants and donations, and future government share in the sale of Certificates of Emission Reduction (CER and other sources;
- To encourage government to engage its bilateral and multilateral partners in additional demand ODA towards programs on climate change adaptation particularly in land and water use, land use change and forestry, in reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD), coastal zones and fisheries, industry, facilities, farming practices, and promotion and development of renewable and indigenous clean energy;
- To encourage greater participation of the media in disseminating information on climate change adaptation, within the overall framework of sustainable development, to local communities, at the grassroots level such that all modes of information, education and communication to increase awareness and appreciation of climate change are utilized;
- To promote social dialogue between workers and employers to realize potential for green and decent jobs through positive support for workers and employers in the transition towards environmentally sustainable patterns of production and consumption;
- To urge the national government to vigorously collaborate with all countries in the Conference of Parties and other international negotiations to push for more aggressive and more immediate emission reduction targets for developed countries, more expeditious implementation of adaptation funds and possibly the creation of a new global fund initiative under the UN system to pump prime the process in a manner that will ensure direct benefits to the local communities;
- We call on the President, the Senate of the Philippines and the House of Representatives to adopt this Declaration through a concurrent resolution as a basis for priority and prospective legislation to protect and enhance the environment.

Unanimously adopted by the **First National Conference on Climate Change Adaptation** in Albay, Philippines this 23rd day of October, 2007

(SGD) THE PARTICIPANTS

GOVERNOR JOEY SALCEDA
Convenor

http://www.nccca.we.bs/
http://www.albaydeclaration.we.bs/

RP five checks in; tablenet bets swept

24th SOUTHEAST ASIAN GAMES

Medal tally	G	S	B
Thailand	14	16	6
Singapore	8	6	6
Vietnam	7	3	11
Malaysia	2	3	5
Myanmar	2	2	1
Philippines	0	3	1
Indonesia	0	0	2
Laos	0	0	0
Brunei	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	0
Timor Leste	0	0	0

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—THE fancied Philippine cage team touched down in Bangkok Tuesday afternoon and took the long bus ride to this bustling province, leading the batch of athletes that will try to end a long gold-medal drought for the Filipinos in the 24th Southeast Asian Games that blasts off Thursday.

Heartbreak stories were aplenty for Filipino shooters after Week 1 of the biennial SEAG as the Philippines, the defending overall champion, will come into the Games proper with only three silvers and one bronze medal to show.

24th SEA GAMES
6 - 15 DECEMBER 2007
NAKHON RATCHASIMA
THAILAND

Considered as shoo-ins for the basketball gold, the Filipinos will have two days of practice before plunging into action versus Cambodia Friday at the 5,000-seat Suranaree University of Technology gym here.

The cagers arrived with 115 other athletes from swimming, billiards and snooker, boxing, gymnastics, lawn tennis, beach volleyball, weightlifting, futsal and squash. They will all be housed at the Athletes' Village, which will be formally opened today.

The rest of the RP men's basketball team schedule will be Indonesia on Sunday, Malaysia on Tuesday and then chief threat and host Thailand on Thursday.

Cage delegation head Mikee Romero had guaranteed victory in the sport that matters most for the Philippines, saying that the only thing that the team needs to avoid in the tournament is lopsided officiating.

"Modesty aside, I think this is ours already," Romero had told the INQUIRER in an interview last week. "The boys are ready to play. They have worked very hard to get to peak form."

Foreign stints and the addition of highly touted former George Mason star Gabe Norwood of Hapee in the PBL and several collegiate standouts at the last minute has boosted the stock of this batch of nationals.

A rich Philippine history in the basketball event of the Games has seen the Filipinos lose just two games—once in the Finals, against Thailand in 1989, and another in an elimination round game against Indonesia in 1997.

And even if Alex Crisano, the controversial Fil-Am center who once played for Barangay Ginebra in the PBA, failed to get accredited because of insufficient documents, the Filipinos are still heavily favored to romp away with the gold medal.

Also in the squad are Ateneo hotshot Chris Tiu, two-time PBL MVP Jason Castro and Santo Tomas center and UAAP MVP Jervy Cruz.

The women's team, beefed up by 6-foot-3 Fil-Am center Amira Issa and Vicki Brick, a 5-foot-7 guard born in Pangasinan but raised in the United States, will arrive Wednesday.

The opening ceremonies, ballyhooed to be the best the Games has ever seen since it will come a day after the King of Thailand celebrates his 80th birthday, will be held at the 20,000-seat stadium center with the theme "Spirit, Friendship and Celebrations."

Meanwhile, in table tennis, the men's team of Henberd Ortalla, Richard Gonzales and Rodel Valle won just one set in being swept away by formidable Singapore at the Klang Shopping Complex.

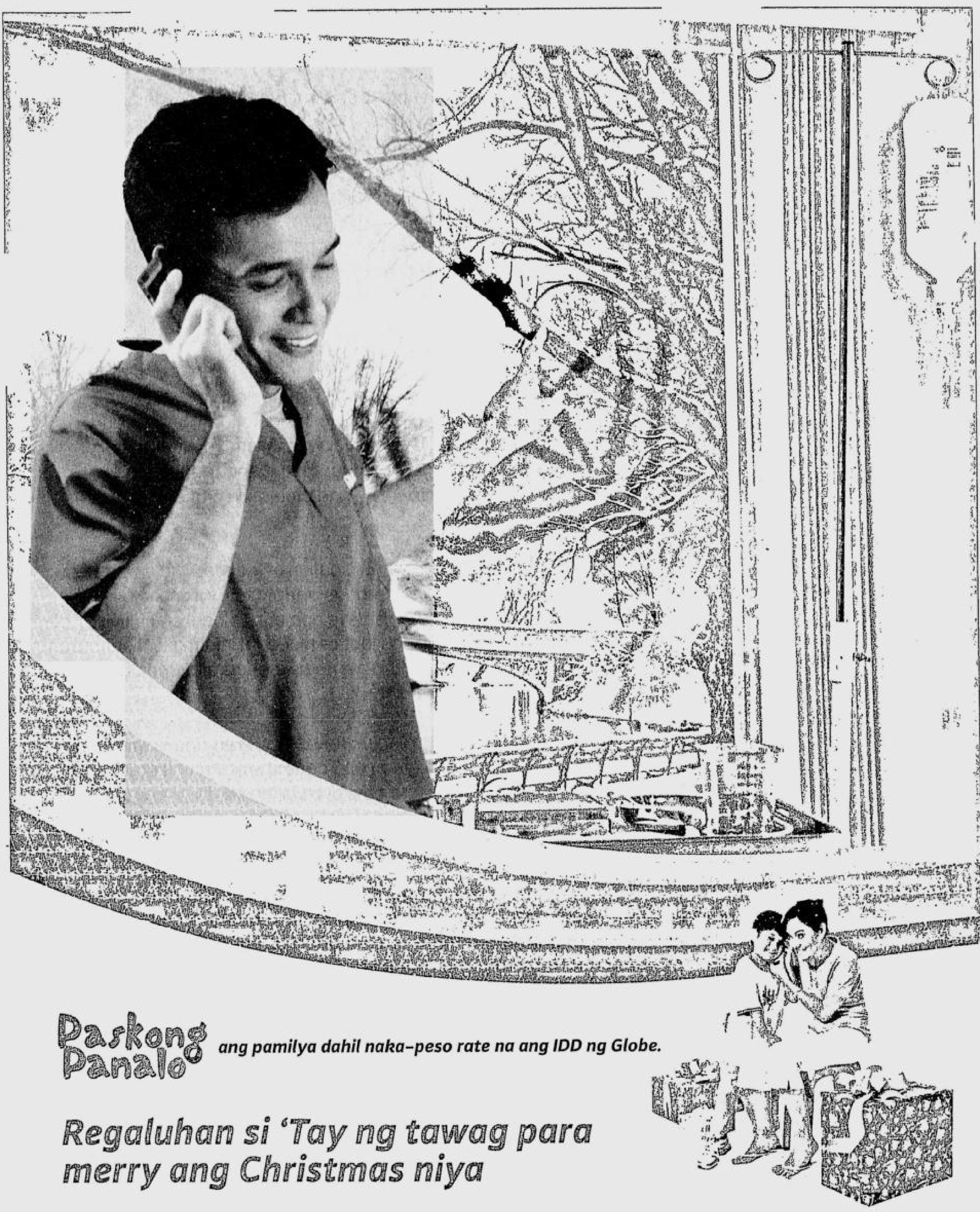
Ortalla won just 15 points in going down, 11-2, 11-4, 11-9 opposite Gao Ning; Valle was worse, losing to Xiaoli Cai, 11-5, 11-2, 11-4 after Gonzales almost took Zi Yang to the limit, 11-8, 11-21, 8-11, 11-7, in the elimination round.

The men's downhill mountain bike run's seeding lap will be staged today at faraway Khao Yai Thieng with a team bannered by Joey Barba and Tour Pilipinas stars Eusebio Quiñones and Erik Feliciano.

The Filipino lady booters return to the Tumbon Mueangpug Stadium at 3:15 p.m. Wednesday, needing to win a crucial match against rock-solid defending champion Vietnam to stay in the hunt for a final four seat that would justify their inclusion in the delegation.

The Philippines was held to a 2-2 draw by lowly Laos on Monday, a dire development considering that the Vietnamese ripped them silly, 9-0, in an AFC tournament in Myanmar earlier this year.

Athletics, which has 51 total athletes and which promised to win 10 gold medals, will arrive together with the archers, wrestlers, judokas and the petanque and baseball players.



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Thousands of volunteers join SEAG blastoff rites

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHISIMA, THAILAND—More than 8,000 performers coming from 35 institutes of this progressive province northeast of Bangkok will fete about 7,000 athletes and officials in a three-hour spectacle to formally open the 24th Southeast Asian Games.

The volunteer performers did a dress rehearsal on Monday, making sure that everything is in synch for the show that will lift the curtain on the greatest sporting event this side of the globe.

His Royal Highness Vajiralong Korn, the Crown Prince of Thailand, is the guest of honor at the opening ceremonies, which have been broken down into nine shows, including the grand parade.

A musical performance gets the show going at 5:30 (6:30 p.m. Manila time), before "The Journey of the SEA Games to Korat," a 30-minute segment, is shown on giant screens around the 20,000-seat His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Stadium here.

The chair of the ceremony, Prime Minister Gen. Sumayud Chulanond, will then be introduced before a 15-minute tribute to King Bhumibol, titled "The Great King," is shown.

Bhumibol, the world's longest reigning monarch, celebrates his 80th birthday Wednesday, the same day when flags of the respective competing nations are raised inside the Athletes' Village, which formally opens at 5:30 p.m.

Reports coming from Philippine officials who have been here said that RP chief of mission, Rep. Monico Puentevella, will not be around to raise the Philippine banner during the ceremonies.

Puentevella joined President Macapagal-Arroyo's state visit to Spain.

Aplus METRO

Editor **Ester G. Dipasupil**
Website: www.inquirer.net/metro

Road diggings suspended during holiday season

By DJ Yap

ALL EXCAVATIONS BY UTILITY companies on major and secondary thoroughfares shall be put on hold this Christmas season to ensure a smoother traffic flow around the metropolis.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority announced yesterday that it would temporarily suspend all road diggings from Dec. 12 to Jan. 7 next year.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said the order was meant to counter the expected huge volume of traffic on major roads and secondary streets around malls, restaurants and other entertainment centers during the holidays.

"Diggings and excavations have to grind to a halt because they tend to cause traffic snarls on major and secondary roads," he said.

Fernando urged government agencies like the Department of Public Works and Highways to take appropriate measures once they receive the memorandum that would be issued soon by the MMDA.

He also asked utility companies, especially water firms, to comply with the directive.

Violators shall be penalized under Section 3 of the MMDA Regulation 98-009, which imposes fines of at least P1,000 and not more than P20,000 or a jail term of at least 30 days but not more than six months.

OBLATION FIREWORKS
The Oblation statue at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City lights up with the fireworks that accompanied the start of Christmas celebrations on campus Monday. The country's premier university is celebrating its 100th anniversary next year. MANMAN DEJETO/CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

State of calamity looms in Muntinlupa

Mayor seeks council declaration after floodwaters submerge 8 barangays

By Julie M. Aurelio

MUNTINLUPA MAYOR ALDRIN SAN PEDRO HAS asked the City Council to place under a state of calamity eight of the city's nine barangays that remain partially submerged in floodwaters due to rains spawned by the recent typhoons.

The affected areas were identified as Barangays Tunasan, Poblacion, Putatan, Bayanan, Alabang, Cupang, Sucat and Buli. They are located in low-lying areas near the shoreline of Laguna Lake. Only Barangay Ayala Alabang was not on the list of stricken areas.

"The recent rains and typhoons have caused flooding, especially in areas along the city's shoreline along Laguna de Bay," San Pedro said.

To address the flooding problem in the eight barangays, the city government is distributing coco lumber for building improvised bridges and walkways.

Al Cosio of the Environmental Sanitation Center said 365 families in Barangays Alabang, Putatan, Tunasan and Cupang were already given their share of the lumber.

The proposal to declare a state of calamity in the city's barangays came two weeks after used oil was dumped in the Tunasan-Cuyab River which later spread to the Tunasan shoreline of Laguna Lake, resulting in a fish kill.

A team from the Laguna Lake Development Authority found out that the used oil came from a coffee plant in San Pedro, Laguna. The identity of the company is being withheld until the team completes its final report.

"We are working with the LLDA in identifying which company caused the oil spill. We want it penalized for violating the country's environmental laws," San Pedro said.

The spilled oil was discovered on Nov. 22 in a drainage at the Villa Carolina I Subdivision in Barangay Tunasan.

Tomas Landrito of the Lake Management Office said water from a creek inside the subdivision flows into the Tunasan-San Pedro boundary river and the Tunasan-Cuyab river, which ends up at Laguna de Bay.

"The oil spill threatened to pollute Laguna Lake, a source of livelihood for hundreds of fishermen."

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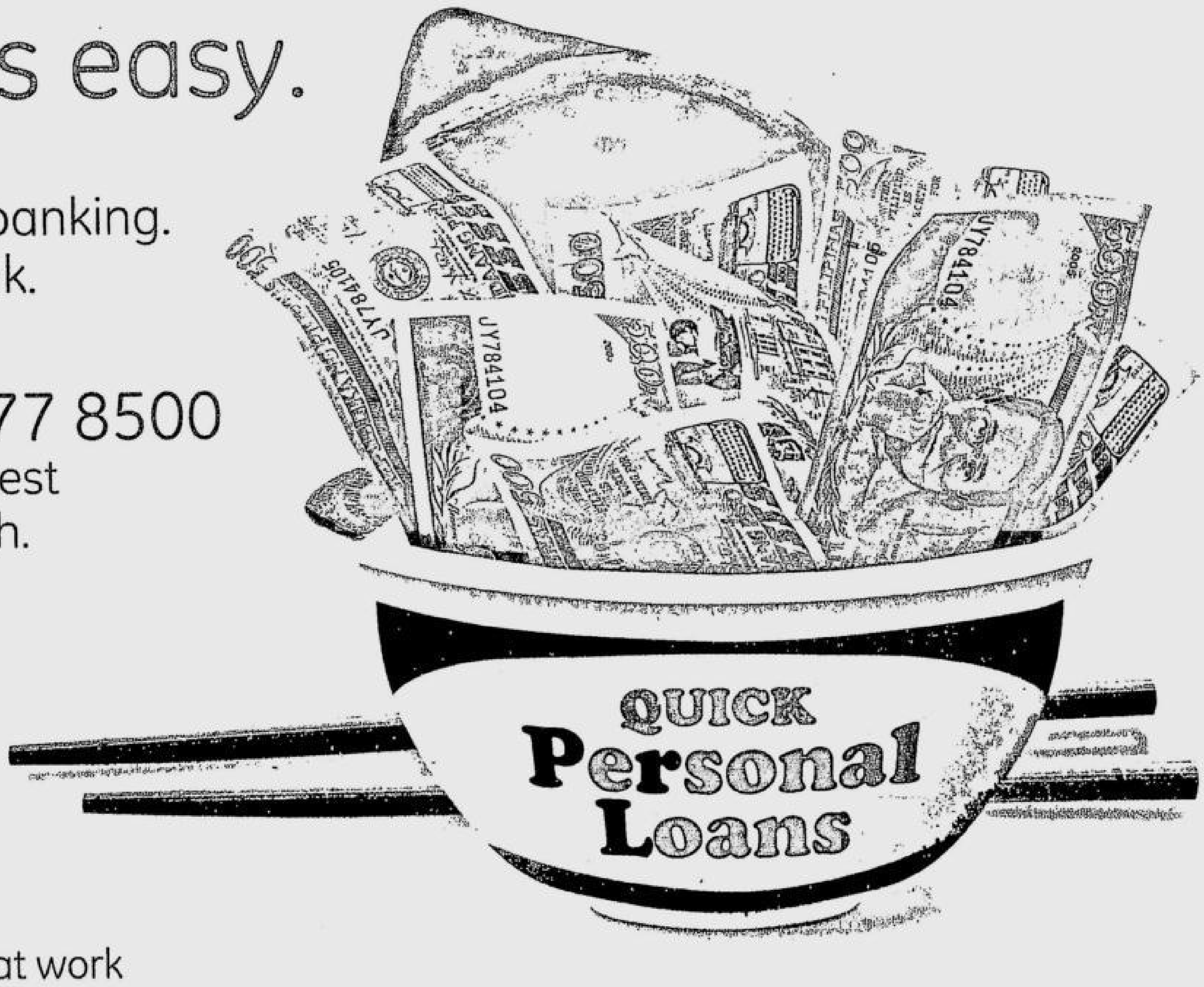

Camanava flood control project finished by next year

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND Highways official yesterday assured residents of northern Metro Manila that the Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela) Mega Flood Control Project would be completed next year despite the recent breaching of the Malabon dike.

DPWH Camanava Mega Flood Control Project Director Carla Bartolo said an investigation conducted after last week's typhoons showed the breach was caused by heavy rains, high tide and the unexpected release of water from Angat Dam.

"The collapse of the existing old dike is technically considered a force majeure; the prevention was beyond human control," Bartolo said.

The DPWH immediately placed sandbags along the collapsed dike as a remedial measure, she added.

Bartolo, however, emphasized that with the near completion of the "mega dike," flooding in the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela would become a thing of the past.

The DPWH official said the P5 billion flood control project would be completed in September next year.

"We are appealing to Camanava residents to be more patient because we are strictly following the legal procedures in the processing of illegal encroachment in some of the project sites," Bartolo said.

"We are also coordinating with private utility companies for the relocation of their cable lines which would be directly hit during the implementation of the project," she added.

Victim of suspected vigilantes found dead in Quezon City

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A GROUP OF SUSPECTED VIGILANTES known for stuffing their victims inside garbage bags and leaving the bodies in Cubao, Quezon City struck again before dawn yesterday.

The body of the latest victim was found by tricycle driver Norberto Togores Jr. at 2:30 a.m. on Benitez Street near the corner of P. Tuazon Boulevard in Barangay San Martin de Porres, Cubao.

The victim, who had been stuffed into a garbage bag, was around 25 to 30 years old, between 5'8" and 5'10" tall, of slim built and fair-skinned.

Like the previous victims, he also had tattoos all over his body, including one that said "Batang City Jail."

The other victims were either members of the "Sigue-Sigue," "Sputnik," "Commando," "Batang City Jail" and Bahala Na," gangs, as shown by their tattoos.

The discovery brought to seven the number of the suspected vigilante group's victims who had all been hogtied and their mouths taped shut with packaging tape. All bore stab wounds and ligature marks around the neck.

The last body was found on Nov. 20 in a parking lot in Barangay San Roque.

Before that, another body was found on Oct. 9 on Cambridge Street in Barangay E. Rodriguez.

On Sept. 23, two more bodies were found separately. The first was found near the garage of the Dagupan bus terminal at the corner of P. Tuazon and C. Benitez Streets in Barangay Kaunlaran.

The second victim was discovered at the corner of 11th and 12th Avenues in Barangay Socorro.

The other two were found at the corner of Columbia and Albany Streets in Barangay Silangan and at the corner of the Lantana Service Road and E. Rodriguez Avenue in Barangay Immaculate Conception.

None of the cases has been resolved by the police so far.

METROBRIEFS

4 hurt in road accident

FOUR persons, including a teenager, were injured when their vehicle rammed a tree early morning yesterday on the Sumulong Highway in Rizal province. Marikina Rescue 161 worker Joemar Evangelista said the incident occurred at around 5 a.m. He identified the victims as Ryan Joseph Santos, 22; Marlon Zapanta, 20; Rueben Zapanta, 16 and a certain Jeremy, 20, all residents of San Mateo, Rizal. They sustained injuries in different parts of the body. According to the victims' statements, Santos, who was driving, was trying to overtake another vehicle but lost control of the car because the road was slippery. The Honda Civic he was driving then slammed into an acacia tree by the highway. All four admitted to being a little tipsy, having come from a drinking session. Evangelista said the victims were taken to the Amang Rodriguez Medical Center.

Kristine L. Alave

Suicide or foul play?

THE BODY of a marine engineering student was found floating in the Marikina River on Tuesday morning, police reported yesterday. P03 Edwin Arce, the investigator, said the body of Jeremias Jarada III, 20, was found by fishermen at around 10 a.m. under the Macapagal Bridge in Barangay IVC, Marikina City. The victim, he added, had been missing since Nov. 28 and was identified through identification cards found in his pocket. According to his ID, Jarada was a third year student of the PMI Colleges in Roosevelt, Cubao, Quezon City and a resident of Twinville Subdivision in Marikina City. At first, Arce said they thought that Jarada was a hazing victim because of the minor injuries in his body. The police, however, were contacted by the victim's relatives who told them that they had found a suicide note inserted in a notebook in Jarada's room. "He had a long letter. He asked for forgiveness from everyone," Arce said. According to the policeman, the victim was extremely depressed over his failing grades. He said that Jarada's tuition was being shouldered by his relatives and that he was probably worried that he would be scolded. The police, however, have yet to determine if Jarada died of drowning or asphyxiation as there were bruises around his neck.

Kristine L. Alave

Breakfast in school

STARTING this month, each student in Manila's 71 public elementary schools will be given a glass of milk and biscuits as part of the city government's nutrition program. According to Mayor Alfredo Lim, "It has been noted by public school teachers that a number of students often go to school without even eating breakfast. There are even those who cannot even afford to bring food to school due to poverty." Dr. Ma. Luisa Quiñones, superintendent of Division of City Schools, said the feeding program would greatly benefit the students, particularly their academic performance. Citing medical studies, Dr. Marie Lorraine Sanchez, chief of the Manila Health Department, showed that a child who is well nourished and who eats a good breakfast always ends up doing good in academics. "The same studies indicated that a child who skips breakfast ends up sleeping in class, disoriented and performing poorly because he or she fails to actively participate in class discussions," Sanchez added.

Tina G. Santos

Lit cigarette causes fire

A 42-YEAR-OLD man was badly burned in a blaze that hit his home late Monday night in Quezon City. Joel Olavides sustained second degree burns on his body and is now undergoing treatment at the East Avenue Medical Center. The fire was started by a lit cigarette inside his bungalow at Block 60, Lot 54 on Lakambini Street, Lagro Subdivision, in Barangay Greater Lagro. It was not clear, however, who lit the cigarette.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Robbers' target was building next to police HQ

By Nancy C. Carvajal

ROBBERS STRUCK OVER THE weekend in Navotas City, breaking into a high school building located beside the police headquarters and City Hall.

According to the police, unidentified men broke into the canteen of the Navotas National High School sometime between Nov. 30 and Dec. 2 and made off with canned goods, several appliances, equipment and an undetermined amount of money.

Navotas police chief, Senior Supt. Eric Reyes, said that among the items taken by the thieves were a DVD player, a radio cassette and school supplies.

The thieves were able to get inside the campus through a small hole in the wall surrounding the building. Reyes said nobody had noticed the hole because it was covered by a garbage bin.

He added that the robbers could have used a child to enter the premises through the hole and open the gates for them. "The hole is so small only a child can enter through it," Reyes said.

Rolando Belina, a teacher and a member of the cooperative operating the canteen, reported the theft to the police.

He said this was not the first time the canteen had been robbed, but this time the robbers also stole the food supplies.

"We did not report the previous incidents because the amount taken was negligible, but now they took everything," he said.

DID YOU KNOW

AMERICAN baseball greats Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig played against Filipinos in December 1934 at the then spanking new Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Malate, Manila.

The three-game goodwill series between the Americans and Filipinos was swept by the US major league all-star team.

The afternoon matches sold tickets at P2 each, a considerable amount back then, for the bleachers section.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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WORLDBRIEFS

Cold feet on air

SYDNEY—A faint-hearted drug-smuggler left more than half-a-million dollars worth of cocaine in an aircraft toilet after getting cold feet on a flight from Los Angeles to Sydney, customs officials said on Tuesday. Nearly six kilos of cocaine was found in 12 shrink-wrapped blocks dumped in a garbage bin in one of the rear toilets of a Boeing 747 after its arrival at Sydney airport on Sunday. "It's pretty obvious that whoever planned to import these drugs got cold feet at some stage," customs spokesperson Gayle Brown said in a statement. *AFP*

Let them be displayed

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia will continue to allow Christian missionary schools to display crosses, a minister said according to a report on Tuesday, after calls to have them removed triggered a furor. Deputy Education Minister Noh Omar told parliament there was no reason to take down the religious symbols in Muslim-majority Malaysia—where ethnic Indian and Chinese communities practice Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. "We will continue with the current practice, which is a tradition started a long time ago," he said according to The Star newspaper. *AFP*

Jail over illegal sale

SAN FRANCISCO—A California man was sentenced on Monday to two years in prison for helping arrange the illegal sale of a night vision camera to China, US prosecutors said. Philip Cheng, 60, also was ordered to pay a $50,000-fine after having pleaded guilty to assisting in the export of the camera, which is considered sensitive military technology regulated by the Pentagon. *AFP*

KL scratches contests

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysia has banned scratch-and-win contests after thousands of people complained they were duped and did not receive the promised prizes, an official said on Tuesday. In scratch-and-win contests, consumers are given paper cards with an area coated with colored plastic that can be scratched with a coin to reveal whether a prize has been won. Authorities said direct sales staff often duped consumers at supermarkets or at their doorsteps. *AP*

CAR BOMB ATTACK
An Afghan Crime Scene investigator collects evidence at the site of a suicide car bomb in Kabul on Tuesday. A suicide bomber rammed the car into a convoy of Nato forces close to the airport, wounding several Afghan civilians.
REUTERS

Russian dailies doubt Putin win

MOSCOW—RUSSIAN NEWSPAPERS questioned on Tuesday whether weekend elections were really the resounding success the Kremlin had hoped for and pointed out that President Vladimir Putin's government could face some turbulent days ahead.

The broadsheet newspapers Kommersant and Nezavisimaya both reported that the Kremlin was disappointed with the 64.1 percent received by Putin's United Russia party after Sunday's parliamentary polls, as evidenced, Kommersant said, by Putin's failure to join election night celebrations.

The problem, said the newspapers, was that the result—though high by Western standards—was lower than the support for Putin registered at the country's last presidential election in 2004.

That was disappointing, the papers said, because the elections had been specifically billed by the Kremlin as a referendum on the Russian leader.

"The absence of the leading candidate at party headquarters on election night, especially during victory celebrations, is something unprecedented. It can be taken as a sign of dissatisfaction on the part of the president," Kommersant said.

The mass market Moskovsky Komsomolets said that despite United Russia's electoral success in gaining more than two thirds of Duma seats, "the referendum on trust in Putin's course failed."

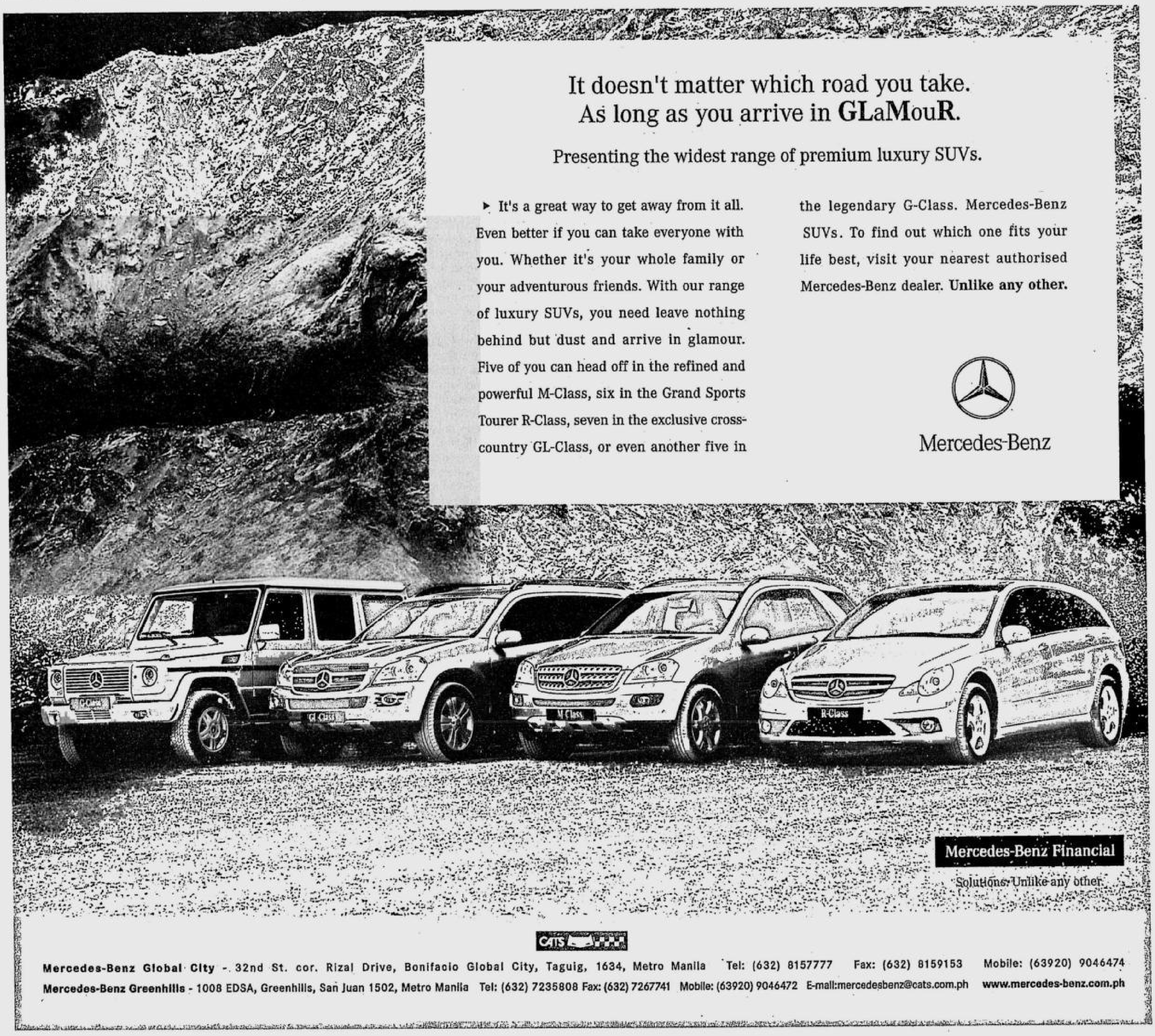
The independent Nezavisimaya Gazeta echoed this and also pointed to rising tensions within the present cabinet.

It said that while a government shake-up could be expected, there remained little clarity about the country's path ahead of a presidential poll in March.

"The head of state sacrificed his personal rating on the altar of a United Russia victory," Nezavisimaya Gazeta said.

Putin is obliged by the constitution to stand down after the March poll but no heavyweight candidate has thrown his or her hat into the ring as a possible successor.

Meanwhile, tensions remain evident around the figure of liberal Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin and the recent arrest of his deputy, Sergei Storchak, on embezzlement charges, Nezavisimaya Gazeta said. *AFP*



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The WORLD

China warms up to Vatican, installs two new bishops

GUANGZHOU—CHINA'S STATE-backed Catholic church installed a Vatican-approved bishop in the southern diocese of Guangzhou on Tuesday, just days after another was consecrated in the central province of Hubei.

The promotions of Gan Junqiu in Guangzhou and Lu Shouwang in Yichang signalled an improvement in relations between Beijing and Rome after ties were strained last year by the unilateral promotion of three Chinese bishops without papal approval.

China's eight to 12 million Catholics are split between a state-sanctioned church and an underground church that rejects government ties and answers only to Rome. Beijing and the Vatican have no formal diplomatic relations.

Gan's ceremony was closed to the media and all but a few hundred Catholics, but others watched a live TV broadcast nearby.

The state-backed church welcomed the Vatican's approval, but Lu Guocun, vice chair of China's Catholic Patriotic Association, emphasized that Gan was China's choice.

"If they approve the bishops that we select, this is a good development ... We don't oppose their approval, but this bishop was picked by us last year in October," Lu told reporters after the two-and-a-half hour ceremony. He estimated the Vatican approved of over 80 percent of Chinese bishops.

"We hope China and the Vatican establish relations at an early date. When we hold Mass every day, we pray for this."

But even though the officially atheist Communist government and the Vatican may have agreed on the latest consecrations, Anthony Lam of the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong cautioned against reading too much into them.

"Of course, it's a good thing that both sides (approved), especially (that) the religious affairs bureau in China is not pushing its candidates too hard," he said. "In general, though, I cannot associate it with ... new change in religious policy." *Reuters*

'DROWNING' SCENARIO
Environmental activists mimic a scenario of being "drowning" during a rally at the venue of the UN Climate Change Conference 2007 in Nusa Dua, on Bali island, on Tuesday. The 11-day conference, which started on Monday, aims to craft a blueprint for negotiations leading to a new pact for addressing global warming. *Story on Page 1.* AFP

Payback for triplets

BEIJING—A BEIJING TRIPLETS have enlisted in China's People's Liberation Army, continuing a family tradition and "repaying the nation" for the care they received as infants, a news report said on Tuesday.

Brothers Yang Yuelong, Yang Yuegang and Yang Yueqi will serve together in a unit guarding China's northern frontier, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

It cited their father, Yang Hongqian, as saying the brothers, now 18, had a difficult birth and might have died without the care they received at a military hospital.

"So ... their lives were due to the PLA and joining the Army was a way of repaying the nation," their father was quoted as saying. *AP*

US report contradicts Bush on Iran nuke bid

WASHINGTON—A NEW US INTELLIGENCE report says Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003 and it remains on hold, contradicting the Bush administration's earlier assertion that Tehran was intent on developing a bomb.

The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) released on Monday could undermine US efforts to convince other world powers to agree on a third package of UN sanctions against Iran for defying demands to halt uranium enrichment activities.

Tensions have escalated in recent months as Washington has ratcheted up the rhetoric against Tehran, with US President George W. Bush insisting in October that a nuclear-armed Iran could lead to World War Three.

But in a finding likely to surprise US friends and foes alike, the latest NIE concluded: "We do not know whether (Iran) currently intends to develop nuclear weapons."

That marked a sharp contrast to an intelligence report two years ago that stated Iran was "determined to develop nuclear weapons."

But the new assessment found Iran was continuing to develop technical means that could be used to build a bomb and it would likely be capable of producing enough enriched uranium for a nuclear weapon "sometime during the 2010-2015 timeframe."

The shift in the intelligence community's thinking on Iran comes five years after a flawed NIE concluded neighboring Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction—a report that helped pave the way for the US-led invasion in March 2003.

No nuclear, chemical or biological weapons were ever found in Iraq and intelligence agencies since have been more cautious about Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, who have repeatedly accused Iran of seeking nuclear weapons, were briefed on the new NIE last Wednesday.

Washington, which insists it wants to solve the Iran problem diplomatically while leaving military options "on the table," is pushing for tougher UN sanctions against Tehran but faces resistance from China and Russia. Iran insists it wants nuclear technology only for civilian purposes, such as electricity generation.

The nuclear standoff has become a major issue in the 2008 US presidential campaign, with candidates considering prospects for military action against Iran.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, among senior Democrats who had requested the updated report on Iran, said the assessment challenged some of the administration's "alarming rhetoric about the threat posed by Iran."

He and other critics had accused Bush trying to rush the country into war again based on faulty intelligence. *Reuters*

HP Leads Philippine Blade Market with New Products

New technologies, services designed specifically for "Global 500,000" midsize companies launched

Manila, Philippines -HP Philippines has announced its lead in the local market for blade infrastructure, with a total market share of 53.1 percent, according to IDC data. HP also leads the blade industry in terms of revenue with a 51.5 percent market share. As of mid-2007, HP's blade server segment grew over 200 percent year-on-year.(1)

To reinforce its market lead, HP Philippines has introduced new products, solutions and services designed specifically to help the world's midsize companies - the "Global 500,000" - accelerate growth and reduce operating costs.

Highlighting the launch is the compact HP BladeSystem c3000 enclosure for smaller technology sites, branch offices and remote locations. Implementation of the c3000 requires no special power, cooling or staff, easing midsize customers' ability to gain the benefits of a fully bladed environment.

HP also unveiled the HP StorageWorks All-in-One SB600c Storage Blade, which works in both the new c3000 and the existing HP BladeSystem c7000. Additionally, HP has released new application "blueprints," called HP Solution Blocks, which simplify and accelerate the integration of multiple application and data protection solutions into the new c3000 enclosure.

New HP research indicates that two-thirds of midsize businesses want technology offerings that meet their needs and are created just for them. In addition, almost 90 percent of senior business and technology executives at midsize companies say their company is doing more with less by using technology.(1)

The new products, backed by a set of HP Care Pack services, expand HP's Adaptive Infrastructure portfolio, which helps customers of all sizes reap the benefits of an infrastructure tailored to meet their business requirements.

"Midsize customers don't want scaled-down enterprise solutions," said Veronica Escalante, Industry Standard Servers Product Manager, HP Philippines. "They demand complete, powerful solutions that address their specific needs."

New HP offerings for midsize businesses built from the ground up

With limited budgets and small IT staffs, midsize companies are challenged to do more with less and, as a result, require very different solutions than their enterprise counterparts. In addition to the HP BladeSystem c3000, HP is addressing this challenge with new offerings that include:

- HP StorageWorks All-in-One SB600c - Storage blade for the new c3000 enclosure helps customers protect their businesses with easy-to-use backup, archiving and disaster recovery capabilities - all without requiring specific storage expertise. It is the only storage blade solution available today that delivers bladed network-attached storage, iSCSI SAN capabilities and data protection in a single device.

With the SB600c, growing businesses can expand their storage and have data protection without additional cables or management. Customers can easily migrate data from older servers or add storage capacity to applications through a series of simple clicks without requiring specialized storage expertise.

Customers also can back up data within the c3000 using the HP StorageWorks Ultrium 448c Tape Blade, which provides data protection for all servers and associated storage.

- HP Total Care Initiative - Newly expanded for the midmarket, the initiative provides customers with resources for making technology decisions, maximizing technology investments for quick return on investment and keeping businesses safe.
- HP Midsize Business Solutions - Available through HP channel partners, these tested "blueprints" deliver business outcomes through accelerated deployment for applications such as mail, messaging, customer relationship management and enterprise resource planning. These solutions are optimized to address key business priorities of midsize companies such as continuity, security and efficiency.
- HP's solutions for midsize companies are designed and integrated with software from partners such as Citrix®, Microsoft, Oracle, Sage Software, SAP and VMware, as well as local independent software vendors. The simple, affordable and reliable solutions are from some of the best companies in the industry and designed for midsize businesses. The solutions extend across all HP ProLiant servers, HP BladeSystem and HP StorageWorks midmarket offerings.
- For businesses looking to run multiple applications in a single consolidated environment, thus optimizing the use of their HP BladeSystem enclosure, HP offers HP BladeSystem Solution Blocks. These tested and documented combinations of HP server blades, storage blades and management software were developed for the channel to quickly configure and deliver multiple applications on the BladeSystem c3000.

Simple, all-in-one design adds savings to the bottom line

The HP BladeSystem c3000 reduces the time and cost it takes to deploy new business applications, enabling small IT staffs to deliver big business outcomes. Savings can then be redirected to other initiatives to fund future growth. Customers realize:

- Power and cooling savings of up to 30 percent;
- Storage-area networking (SAN) connection costs reduced up to 60 percent;
- Cabling reduced by up to 94 percent, which lowers costs and complexity; and
- Breakeven costs at three to five server blades.(2)

"Businesses with space and IT staffing constraints can now utilize the full benefits of bladed infrastructure," said Escalante. "The c3000 is a 'deploy anywhere, do anything' infrastructure that's easy to manage and upgrade."

The rack-based c3000 features a compact 10.5-inch-high design that fits up to eight blades, plugs into a standard 110- or 220-volt wall outlet and provides easy-to-connect networking. The tower version of the c3000, expected to be available in November, is outfitted with the same features and will require only two square feet of floor space.

The c3000 has full compatibility with the existing line of HP BladeSystem c-Class servers and network connectivity options. It also supports the HP ProLiant, Integrity and StorageWorks server and storage blades.

Technology core to business success

HP research shows that 88 percent of business decision makers at midsize companies believe that technology is integral to the success of their business outcomes.

- To be effective, midsize business CIOs must lead an organization that meets the expectations of the business. Midsize businesses prefer to purchase a business solution versus a technology solution and want to see the business value before they make an IT investment," said James Browning, vice president, SMB Research, Gartner Inc. "For blade adoption and use to increase in the midmarket, server vendors will need to deliver solution-based blade systems that support a business need."

Partnering with the Industry's best

Because midsize customers rely on the value channel partners bring to their businesses, HP has already trained more than 5,000 worldwide HP Blade System Channel partners to deliver the new products and services today.

Midsize customers, however, look to a technology vendor for more than quality technology provided through trusted channel partners. According to HP's survey, 90 percent of midsize companies said it is important that their technology provider has good relationships with a wide range of software manufacturers.

HP has a market-leading track record of forming alliances with the top ISVs. The company works with its partners to ensure the best implementations of midsize businesses' favorite applications run on HP systems delivered through an extensive network of HP-certified resellers.

New services and certifications to increase return on investment

HP Services has developed three new HP Care Pack services to help customers get the most out of their c3000 investments. Available through HP and its channel partners, the packaged, fixed-price services include HP Support Plus 24 for c3000, c3000 Installation & Start-up and c3000 Enclosure Hardware Support.

More information on today's announcement is available in an online press kit at www.hp.com/go/hpmidmarketlaunch. Copies of the full research report are available upon request.

(1) IDC APJ Quarterly Server Tracker, August 2007.
(2) Penn, Schoen & Berland Associates, "HP Mid-Market Business Technology Study," August 2007. Commissioned by HP, the full report is available upon request.
(3) Based on internal HP testing compared to standard rack servers. Results vary based on Ethernet and Fibre Channel connectivity costs.

Oops, wrong Miss California

LOS ANGELES—AN ACCOUNTING MIX-UP led to the wrong woman being crowned Miss California USA, and she has relinquished her crown to the rightful winner, organizers said on Monday.

Christina Silva, 24, was declared the winner of the annual state beauty pageant, but she gave up the title to Raquel Beezley, who was originally named the second runner-up. Beezely, 21, will represent the state at the Miss USA pageant next April.

The pageant's state director, Keith Lewis, said several judges questioned the results of the Nov. 25 competition at the Orpheum Theater in Los Angeles. Lewis said the error was discovered the next day after the ballots were opened and recounted.

"It was a simple human error," Lewis said.

The contestants were scored by five celebrity judges who independently ranked them. The mix-up occurred when the points were reversed, with the lowest point given to the winner and the highest to the fourth runner-up, Lewis said.

Roger Neal, who represents the Miss California USA pageant, said Beezley is the rightful winner. The pageant allowed Silva to keep her crown, sash and necklace and returned her $1,500 entry fee. Duplicates were being made for Beezley. *AP*

FAMILIAR SIGHT
A shopkeeper assembles a model of Santa Claus with a saxophone for sale at a shop in Hanoi on Tuesday. Christmas, a Christian holiday, is becoming more familiar to residents of cities of this majority Buddhist country. AFP

Sharif banned from election; opposition warns of boycott

ISLAMABAD—PAKISTANI AUTHORITIES barred former Premier Nawaz Sharif on Monday from standing in January's general election, sparking fresh threats from the opposition to boycott the vote and rob it of credibility.

Hours after he was disqualified, Sharif and fellow opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said they would issue a joint list of demands for the government to meet or else they could pull out of the polls.

Electoral officials upheld a challenge against Sharif's candidacy on the grounds that he was convicted of criminal charges in the wake of his 1999 ouster by Pervez Musharraf, who is now president.

"The nomination papers of Nawaz Sharif are hereby rejected," election commission returning officer Raja Qamaruz Zaman said in the eastern city of Lahore.

A rival election candidate for Sharif's seat, Khawaja Tahir Zia, had asked the commission to disqualify Sharif because he had been convicted in a hijacking case in 2000.

The case involved Sharif's attempt to stop a plane carrying Musharraf, who was then Army chief, from landing in Pakistan in 1999. Sharif was ousted because of that incident.

Sharif's lawyers said they planned to file an appeal against his disqualification.

"How can elections be free and fair in these circumstances?" Syed Zafar Ali Shah, the vice president of Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party, said. *AFP*

WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

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- **Outlaw** shoots down Grizzlies /A31

Sadorra shares chess lead with GM Ni /A32

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ONCE MORE WITH FEELINGS: Members and team officials of the UST squad celebrate their victory at center court AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Tigresses triumph

Shakey's V-League champ best Lady Stags in 5

By Romina S. Austria

VENUS BERNAL PUT A PERFECT ENDING to University of Santo Tomas' winning season: a smash that sliced through San Sebastian College's defense.

The Tigresses capped their domination of the Lady Stags with a 20-25, 25-23, 27-29, 25-15, 15-9 decision last night to nail the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference crown at The Arena in San Juan.

The Tigresses frustrated the Lady Stags anew after sweeping them in the first conference finals. They dropped Game One last Fri-

TIGRESSES/A30

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Big venue, bigger Opening Ceremonies for SEAG

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND—THE VAST expanse of the Suranaree University of Technology grounds was an awe-inspiring sight for Filipino journalists covering the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

The complex, which will be the site of majority of the events, including the keenly awaited men's football competition, dwarfs the size of the Philippines' very own PhilSports complex in Pasig City.

The opening and closing ceremonies will be held at the stadium amply named "His Majesty the King's 80th Birth Anniversary Main Stadium," where crowds of at least 20,000 are expected.

* * *

The Opening Ceremonies of the SEA Games will be held at 6:30 p.m. with no less than His Majesty King Bhumibol expected to grace the event.

Security, as enforced by the Bureau of the Royal Household and the local police force, will be tightened as cameras of photographers will be screened until 4 p.m. and reporters will be asked to "behave in a polite manner."

What's troubling Filipino photographers at this time is the memo that requires all photojournalists to wear a dark suit for the occasion.

Laos standoff hampers lady booters' bid

PINOYSOCCER.COM

THE RP lady booters will try to keep the scores close against the Vietnamese.

By Musong R. Castillo

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—BACK-TO-THE-WALL PHILIPPINES, COMING off a draw that looks more like a loss, tries to stay alive in the hunt for a final four berth in women's football of the 24th Southeast Asian Games when it clashes with Vietnam.

Game time is 3:15 p.m. (4:15 p.m. Manila time) at the Tumbon Mueangpug Stadium Wednesday with the Filipinos labeled as the underdogs against the rock-solid, defending champion Vietnamese.

Team Philippines will be coming into the match smarting from a confidence-deflating 2-2 draw with Laos on Monday, a result that greatly hampered its chances of crashing the semifinals outright and earning at least a shot at a bronze medal.

24th SEA GAMES
6-15 DECEMBER 2007
NAKHON RATCHASIMA
THAILAND

For the young Filipinos to march on without any complications, they would need to humble the vaunted Vietnamese that dealt them a 1-9 shellacking in an Asian FC tournament earlier this year.

And if a victory proves too much to get, losing in the most decent way might just do it for the Filipinos.

Laos, a relative newcomer in SEAG football, will also be facing its neighbor Vietnam on Friday. And in the event that both the Laotians and the Filipinos lose to the Vietnamese, the tiebreak for the No. 2 spot in their group will be applied.

This would mean that whoever loses with the narrower margin opposite the Vietnamese would draw the No. 1 qualifier in Group B, which is made up of Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia.

The Philippines blew a 2-1 lead late in the game against Laos, yielding the game-tying goal to striker Phaivanh Souphavahn in the 73rd minute.

It was a sorry outcome for the Fil-Am reinforced Philippine side, as it controlled the flow of the game despite trailing 0-1 early on.

The Filipinos, who drew goals from Patrice Impelido and Edna Agravante, got a bad break with under 10 minutes left when a critical offensive was ruled off side by one of the referees.

Tigresses top Lady Stags, bag Shakey's V-League title

From page A29

day, 16-25, 19-25, 25-17, 25-23, 13-15, but bounced back with a vengeance in Sunday's Game Two, 25-16, 25-15, 25-21.

The three-time NCAA champion Lady Stags, runners-up for the third straight time, openly wept on the court and had to be coaxed to get off their bench to receive their silver medals.

UST tied La Salle with three titles each in the inter-collegiate tournament. The Tigresses won the inaugural staging in 2004 while the Lady Archers took the twin conferences of 2005 and last year's lone offering.

The deciding set had the Tigresses; behind Bernal—who was later adjudged Most Valuable Player, Mary Jean Balse and guest player Suzanne Roces, pounding the Lady Stags with power attacks while getting additional points off their rivals' errors to go up, 9-4.

The two squads exchanged points from there until San Sebastian's Thai import Jaroensri Bualee made an uncharacteristic service error while Bernal scored on an ace that made it a 14-8 UST lead.

Balse delayed the pro-UST crowd's celebration when her own service hit the net, but after a furious exchange Bernal clinched the title with her unreturned smash.

"They didn't find a way to stop Venus," said UST coach Augusto Santamaria. "We also did a good job returning their shots and guarding the baseline."

Bernal said they did not lose heart even after San Sebastian snatched the third frame, 29-27, to move within one set of snaring the championship.

"We just continued playing because after all, it's not over until it's over," said the 21-year-old Bernal, a senior Business Administration student. "We played well right the start of the tournament and we wanted to end it with a title."

The Tigresses had two chances to win the third set, leading 26-25 and 27-26. Rysabelle Devanadera led San Sebastian's comeback, though, with a smash and a tip-in while Laurene Ann Latigay came up with her own attack to complete the Lady Stags' rally.

San Sebastian went up 1-0 with a 6-2 set-ending run but lost the second, 23-25, on a service error by rookie China Repollo.

UST broke away in the fourth set when Bernal and Balse led an 8-0 attack that pegged the Tigresses' advantage at 21-11.

Bernal led all UST scorers with 25 points while Balse and Roces made 24 each.

Bualee and Latigay made 25 apiece for the Lady Stags.

Ilyushin overwhelms Pinoy wild card; Ho, Barte advance

By Jasmine W. Payo

WEEK 1 CHAMPION ARTEM Ilyushin of Russia downed Filipino wild card Paul Nicole Magaway, 6-4, 6-0, yesterday to lead the march of favorites at the start of Week 2 of the Phinma International Junior Circuit at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Ilyushin, who stunned Filipino hope Francis Casey Alcantara, 6-4, 6-3, for the boys' singles crown last Sunday, never yielded his serve against Magaway.

Joshua Ho and Ralph Kevin Barte made up for Magaway's ouster by winning their respective matches, even as three other Filipino contenders, including Alcantara, have yet to see action.

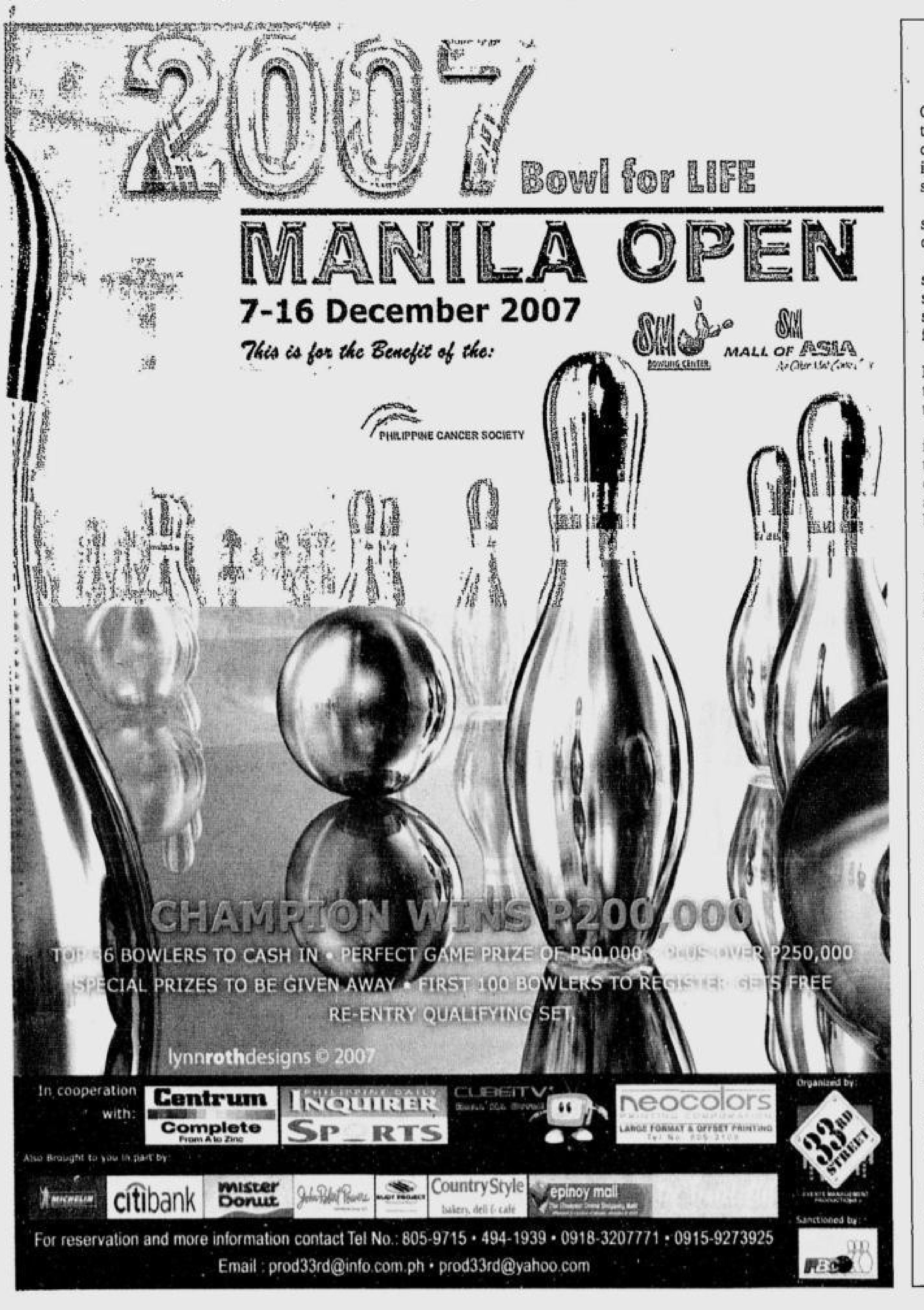
Ho turned back Leander Lazaro, 6-1, 6-3, while Barte also posted an easy 6-2, 6-0 win over Masato Shiga of Japan.

Unseeded Sean White of Australia also advanced with a 6-1, 6-3 victory over Lebanon's Felix Joseph Assad.

In girls' singles, Maria Regina Santiago secured a second-round slot for the Philippines with a 6-0, 6-2, win over fellow wild card Maria Akita San Andres.

Top-seeded Satjaporn Mahajaroenki of Thailand outlasted Japan's Misa Eguchi, 6-1, 7-5, while Taiwanese Yun Ku eliminated Filipina Nivea Bezich, 6-2, 6-2.

Seventh-ranked Iona Laura Alecsiu of Romania outlasted Japan's Minami Hashizume, 7-5, 7-5; Indonesian Laili Rahmawati Ulf disposed another Japanese, Shoko Yamamoto, 6-2, 6-3; and Japanese Maho Kowase bested Australia's Mia Vriens, 6-2, 6-7, 6-1.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RP scores ahead in infighting

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

OUR SHOOTERS CONTINUED TO FIRE AT their feet after nearly a full week of action Monday in the 24th Southeast Asian Games, but Filipino sports scribes were having their hands full shooting saucy dispatches.

For one, there was the more colorful mudslinging match between two top RP delegation officials.

It was still a toss-up between PSC commissioner Ritchie Garcia and national athletics association head Go Teng Kok in their verbal tussle on who was telling the truth on missing funds.

GTK branded Garcia Mr. 30 Percent, but the PSC official said it was an indignity being mentioned in the same breadth with the outspoken track and field boss.

There are certainly severe infighting events in other national sports associations, long after the PSC and POC had tangled on which medical team should officially handle the nutritional and various needs of Filipino competitors in the biennial meet.

* * *

Your reporter here, for one, was scheduled to take a late flight to Thailand last night to catch the opening of the SEA Games.

But before packing up, he was stalled by the lamentations of two male bowlers, the only defending champions for the country in their events, who were unceremoniously scratched from the RP team.

Short of calling Philippine Bowling Congress president Steve Hontiveros a tyrant, Markwin Tee and Joonee Gatchalian said the one-man decision to junk them was irregular and unjust, mainly because it had no board backing.

But, saying he did not want to take a gamble, Hontiveros claimed he had to make an emergency move to prevent another bowling debacle for the RP delegation in the SEA Games.

* * *

But was there board action to support the ouster of the two defending gold medalists?

None, said Hontiveros who quickly claimed he has the power to make last-minute replacements.

Naturally, Hontiveros got hit for allegedly going personal against the two ousted gold-medal hopes.

For the record, Hontiveros called this reporter at least twice on Monday to assure he would be sending by e-mail his reply to the allegations of the ousted bowlers.

Hontiveros, after asking for our e-mail address, said it would be PBC secretary-general Bong Coo who would be sending the reply on behalf of the association.

* * *

Either Ms Bong Coo overslept or she may have never been assessed of the extra task.

While waiting for the message (that never came), Hontiveros told the INQUIRER yesterday that he had to take the gamble for the sake of national interest.

He also claimed that the PBC Board convened Monday "to affirm the decision by the national coaches to drop defending men's Masters champion Tee and Gatchalian, who ruled the men's doubles in 2005 with CJ Suarez, for being 'uncoachable.'"

* * *

That's it as far as the Hontiveros side in this colorful off-court skirmish in the RP contingent to the 24th SEA Games is concerned.

As expected, there came a second email from the anonymous coach who was very grateful that "at least the truth has come out on this grave injustice in RP bowling."

Continued the protesting coach: "I just read (INQUIRER reporter) Marc Reyes' article on bowling today and I would like to warn you that he was obviously taken for a ride. The PBC board did convene but they did not "affirm" the decision of the coaches, as Mr. Hontiveros had claimed. If you'd like more information regarding the board decision, you may call Mrs. Margie Poblete at 0919-8101056. She's a member who can give you and your staff more information."

Much obliged, we rang Ms Poblete who said that there indeed was no board decision affirming the ouster of the two top-rated bowlers.

"In the first place, we had no quorum, it was also too late to either dispute or affirm the decision because Mr. Hontiveros had already made a ruling."

That's it. Before we close this portion of this infighting event in RP bowling, let's give way to this stinging info from the aggrieved anonymous coach.

"A few days ago, they said that the reason they were taking out Markwin was because he had no 'follow up win.' But now, after that weak point was refuted, they threw in the issue of 'coachability.' It's funny because, (based) on the attendance of the national team coaches, they were absent as much as they were present. How can they call players 'uncoachable' when they were never there long enough to coach?"

Wow! What a strike.

Meanwhile, stand by for more exciting infighting events in the RP delegation.

196 coaching changes later, it's still Sloan for the Jazz

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH—THE UTAH Jazz signed coach Jerry Sloan to a contract extension on Monday that will stretch his 20-year tenure with the National Basketball Association club.

Financial terms of the one-year deal were not disclosed, but the Deseret Morning News reported it would make Sloan one of the five highest-paid coaches in the league.

Sloan, who will start his 21st season with Jazz in 2008-09, is the longest-tenured coach with the same team in US professional sports.

Since Sloan joined the Jazz, there have been 196 NBA coaching changes and five clubs have joined the league.

"Jerry has led the Jazz franchise for the past 20 years, and I wouldn't want it any other way," said Jazz owner Larry Miller said. "He teaches the game the way it ought to be played."

Sloan said he was pleased to be coming back for another season.

"I feel honored that Larry is extending my contract and I appreciate the opportunity to work with the Jazz team and franchise," Sloan said.

In his 11-year career as a player, the last 10 with the Chicago Bulls, Sloan was known as a tough defensive specialist.

He has imparted much of that grit to his Jazz teams.

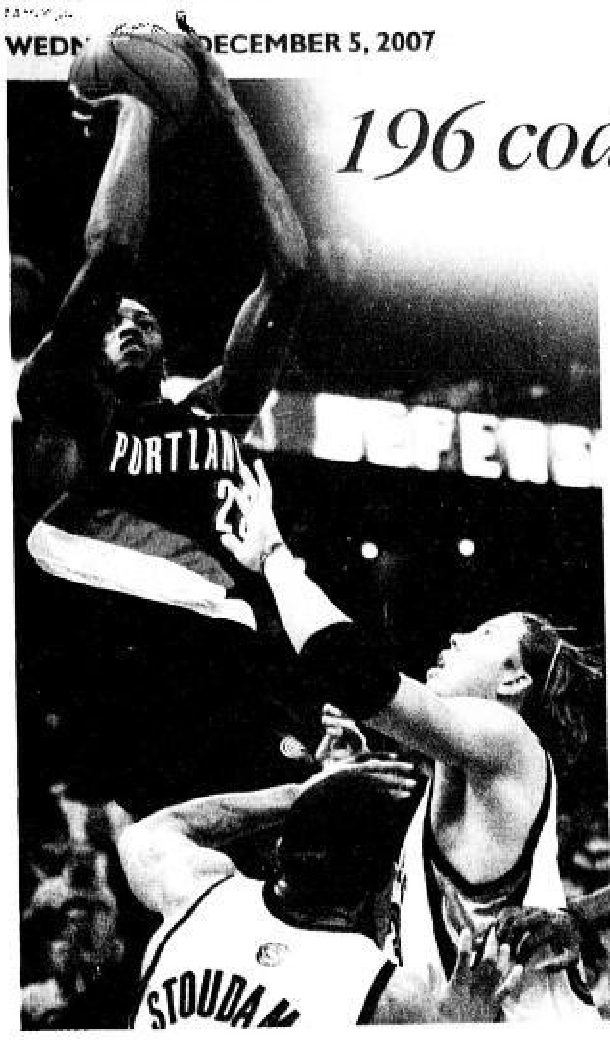
Sloan's most successful teams were led by the combination of John Stockton and Karl Malone, who took the Jazz to back-to-back NBA Finals appearances in 1997 and 1998—falling to Michael Jordan's Bulls both times.

Utah lost to the San Antonio Spurs in the Western Conference finals last season.

With Stockton and Malone gone, Sloan's pick-and-roll system is molding Carlos Boozer and guard Deron Williams into Utah's next All-Star duo.

Last season Sloan became the fifth coach to reach 1,000 career wins last season and is fourth on the NBA's all-time wins list with 1,110.

AFP


PORTLAND
STOUDAM

FOR THE WIN: The Portland Trail Blazers' Travis Outlaw (top) launches the shot that buries the Memphis Grizzlies, a running six-footer that banks off the glassd as time expired. AP

Outlaw shoots down Grizzlies

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE—TRAVIS OUTlaw scored 21 points, including the winning 6-foot runner as the buzzer sounded, to give Portland its first road victory of the season, 106-105, over Memphis on Monday.

Officials reviewed the basket after the game not only to see if Outlaw got the shot off in time, but also whether the clock started properly when Portland inbounded the ball with 2.8 seconds left.

Outlaw took the inbounds pass near midcourt and drove the right side on Mike Miller before firing the off-balance bank shot. Outlaw scored the last seven points for the Trail Blazers over the game's final 56 seconds.

It was Outlaw's second buzzer-beater of the game as his 30-footer at the horn cut Memphis' lead to 80-78 at the end of three quarters.

Rudy Gay had 30 points, including a sweeping rebound tip with 2.8 seconds left to give Memphis the lead before Outlaw's winning basket.

Miller had a season-high 30 points for the Grizzlies.

Brandon Roy had 26 points and nine assists for Portland, which had lost its first nine road games this season.

In other games, it was Atlanta 88, Philadelphia 79; Toronto 98, Charlotte 79; Portland 106, Memphis 105; Dallas 103, Chicago 98; Utah 110, Miami 101; and Orlando 123, Golden State 117 (overtime).

In Philadelphia, Josh Smith scored 22 points and Marvin Williams and Josh Childress both added 16 as Atlanta snapped a seven-game losing streak at Philadelphia.

Joe Johnson scored 15 points and Al Horford had 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Hawks, who last won at Philadelphia on March 21, 2003. Atlanta improved to 3-5 on the road this season.

AP

Baguio, Davao enter inter-cities chessfest

THE BAGUIO CITY CHESS TEAM OF GM EUgene Torre and Davao City, last year's host, has registered for the 2008 Inter-Cities and Municipalities Chess Team Championship slated March 11-16 at the Muntinlupa City Sports Complex.

This was announced yesterday by NCFP executive director lawyer Sammy Estimo after a meeting with Muntinlupa City Mayor Aldrin San Pedro that finalized the details of the annual event.

The top three teams in the 11-round Swiss system tournament will receive P200,000, P100,000 and P50,000, respectively. Cash prizes and medals will also be awarded to the top board placers.

For inquiries, contact Torre (09228822870), Doc Jenny Mayor (09194782209 or Estimo (09159360354).

Marlon Bernardino

Becierra completes rare HK double

HONG KONG AMATEUR OPEN CHAMPion Dante Becierra closed out with a three-over 75 and ruled the Jockey Club Kau Sai Chau-Asian Golf Monthly International Amateur Open by a whopping 12-shot victory to complete a rare sweep of Hong Kong's premier amateur events Sunday.

Becierra, who beat Englishman Edward Richardson by three strokes to capture the Hong Kong Amateur Open title at Clearwater Bay last October, dominated the 54-hole tournament at the HK Jockey Club with an aggregate of 219.

Becierra, who fired a two-under 70 to storm to an eight-stroke lead after 36 holes, won by 12 shots over local bet Alexi Vandamme, who finished with a 231 after a 78.

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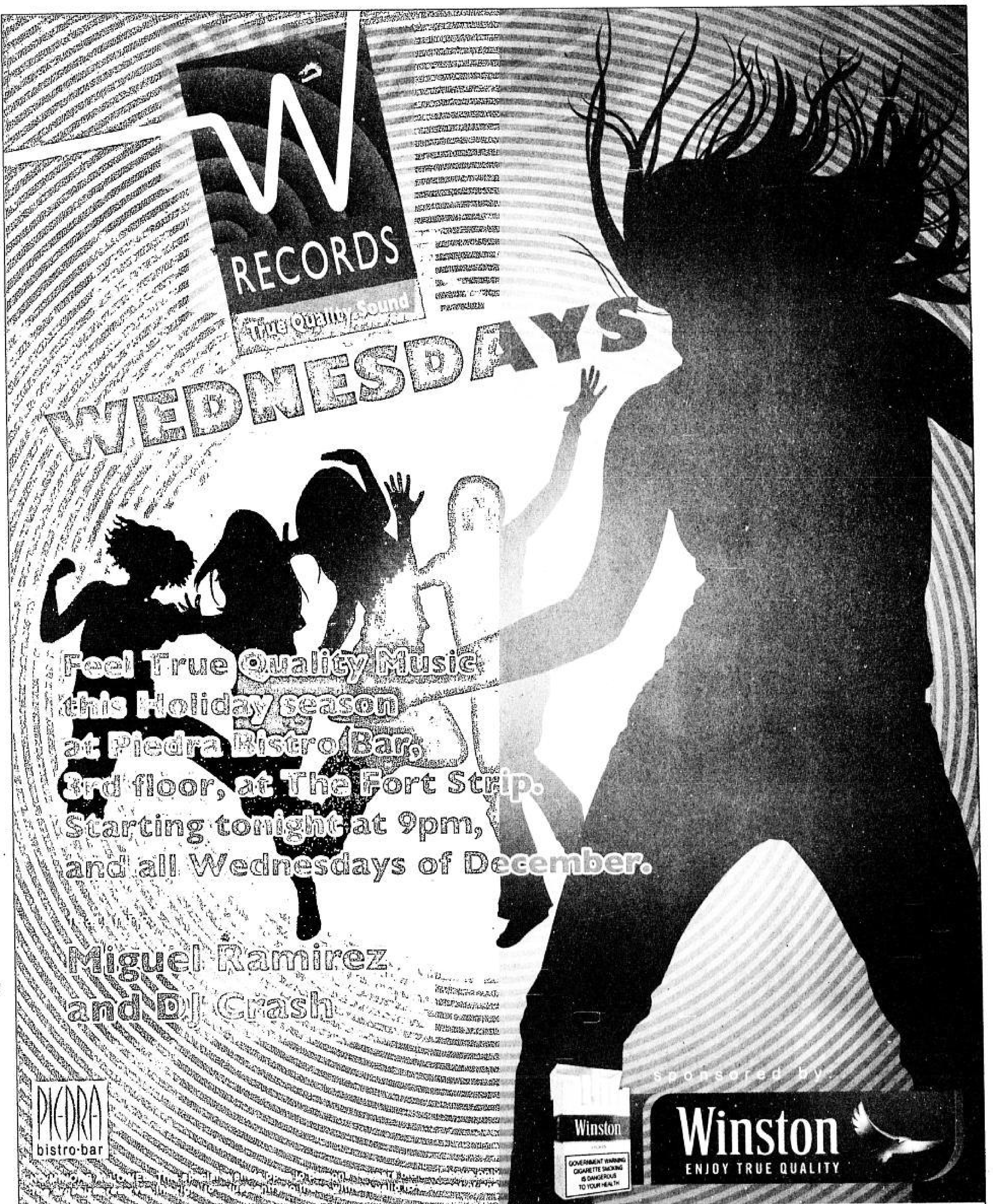
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Crippled Bulls battle new-look Coke Tigers

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Air21	5	5
Sta. Lucia	4	6
Ginebra	4	7
Welcoat	3	8
Coca-Cola	2	8

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:50 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Red Bull
7:20 p.m.—Alaska vs Sta. Lucia Realty

RED BULL WILL BE at its most vulnerable form when it meets Coca-Cola today in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Not only will the Bulls have to make do with a roster that is without its top gun. They will also have to contend with a Tigers crew rejuvenated by the arrival of former MVP Asi Taulava.

Cyrus Baguio, who has been a revelation for a trade-stripped Red Bull squad, contracted chicken pox a day after leading the Bulls to an astounding 108-95 victory over the Air21 Express last Friday, rendering him unavailable in the match against a Tigers squad that just recently wormed out of a long losing spell.

The Tigers defeated the Sta. Lucia Realtors in Lucena City over the weekend, snapping an eight-game skid behind another monster performance from Taulava.

"We have a big problem tomorrow (today)," said Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao, whose Bulls are on a four-game roll. "Asi has been putting up big numbers and Coke is obviously a new team right now."

The 6-foot-9 Taulava, who was shipped by Talk 'N Text in exchange for Ali Peek, threw his weight around the Sta. Lucia frontline with 26 points, 24 rebounds and five assists.

Red Bull playmaker Celino Cruz has also been recovering from the same ailment Baguio has and is still a doubtful starter. That leaves the likes of Mick Pennisi, Junthy Valenzuela and the vastly improved Leo Najorda to anchor the Bulls' bid to improve on their second-running 7-3 slate.

Baguio, who has been carrying the scoring load for the Bulls, will be out for as long as two weeks.

June Navarro

IM Julio Catalino Sadorra ponders his next move against Ronald Dableo.

Sadorra wins twice, ties Ni

Standings after five rounds:
4.5 points—**J. Sadorra (RP)**, H. Ni (China); 4.0—**M. Paragua (RP), W. So (RP)**, C. Li (China), D. T. Hai (Vietnam); 3.5—**R. Antonio (RP), D. Laylo (RP), R. Dableo (RP), R. Bitoon (RP)**, Z. Zhong (Singapore), E. Maghami (Iran), X. Zhang (China), W. Zhou (China), Q. Huang (China), N.A. Dung (Vietnam)

By Roy Luarca

IT WAS FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER Julio Catalino Sadorra's turn to show his mettle in the 2007 Prospero Pichay Cup International chess championship.

The Singapore-based Sadorra trounced IM Ronald Dableo in the fourth round, then beat GM Darwin Laylo in the fifth to gain a share of the lead with top seed GM Ni Hua of China halfway through the $30,000 (about P1.3 million) tournament at the Duty Free Fiesta Mall.

Sadorra, one of the country's brightest hopes at 21 years old, foiled Dableo on Sunday and then subdued Laylo after 48 moves of the Slav Monday night to catch up with Ni at 4.5 points in the nine-round tournament.

Ni bested Oliver Barbosa in the fourth round and halved the point with GM-candidate Wesley So after only 11 moves of the French defense in the fifth to pace the chase for the $5,000 top purse.

The Cavite-born Sadorra, who stunned GM Zhang Zhong of Singapore in Round 2, will part ways with Ni in Round 6 Tuesday night. Julio Catalino, being accompanied by his engineering consultant father Chalito, shocked Ni in last week's second GMA Cup.

Right behind the co-leaders at 4.0 points are 14-year-old So, who also split the point with Laylo in Round 4, and GMs Mark Paragua, Li Chao of China and Dao Thien Hai of Vietnam.

Paragua beat countryman IM Chito Garma and Indonesian IM Tirto, respectively, to match Li's strides.

Li trounced Rolando Nolte in the fourth round and Barbosa in the fifth to stay on track of his second straight title after ruling the second GMA Cup.

Dao drew with IM Richard Bitoon and then whipped unheralded David Elorta.

GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. drew with Chinese WIM Huang Qian and Bitoon, respectively, to share seventh to 16th places with 3.5 points.

3 RP golf team bets playing on borrowed time

By Jong Arcano

BAGUIO—ENLISTING THE SERVICES OF the SEA Games-bound national team players was quite a struggle for rivals Club Marinduque and Manila Southwoods.

Tonyt Fernando, Johnnel Ababa and Mark Fernando will all be playing on borrowed time and their scores at the vicious Baguio Country Club course today and tomorrow are expected to decide the duel between Club Marinduque and Manila Southwoods in the centerpiece division of the 58th Fil-Am championships here.

Newly reinstated to the national team by the NGAP, reigning RP Amateur champ Tonyt Fernando leads the Southwoods attack, while Ababa and Mark Fernando back up pro-bound Jay Bayron in the Club Marinduque squad.

The trio flies to Bangkok on Friday.

"To say that the process to get this team together was punishing is an understatement," said Felix Cortez, owner of Club Marinduque. "I think we made about a hundred calls."

But whatever bargaining chips Cortez used—especially for Bayron to agree to play all four days—will not matter anymore as Club Marinduque plunges into action against a battle-ready Southwoods.

Tonyt will play for only two days but Southwoods captain Thirdy Escano said that is good enough for the team.

"Tonyt will stay if we ask him to but we will never feel good if it means denying the national team someone so important," Escano said.

Meanwhile, the trend of hole-in-one feats continued yesterday with lawyer Jei Panganiban of Club Marinduque and Bing Mercado of Baguio City 3 in the Fil-B division adding their names—the fifth and sixth—to the list.

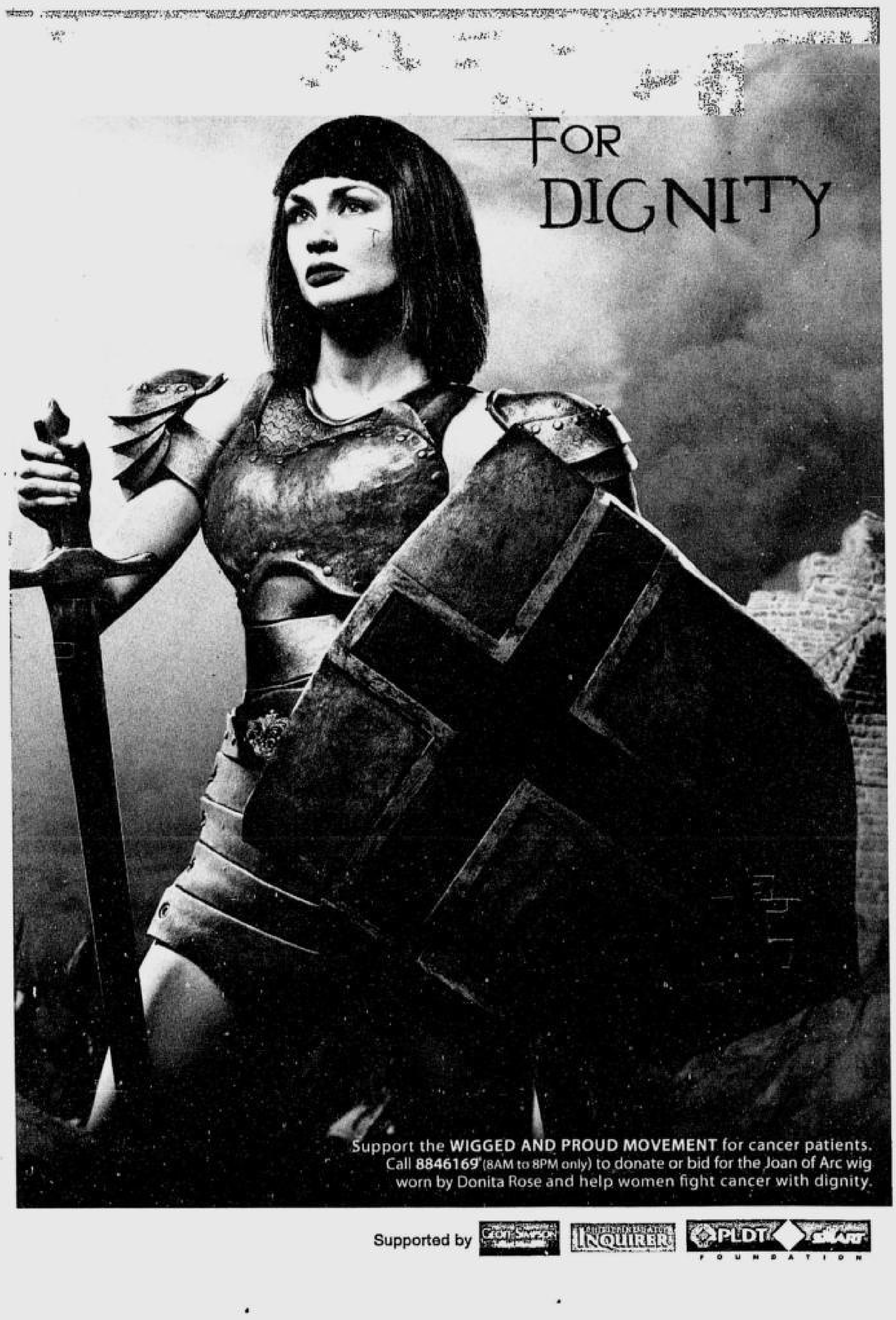
PANGANIBAN

Mercado aced No. 7, also at BCC.

Panganiban used a Maruman Conductor wedge and a Bridgestone Tour B330-S on the 114-yard 9th hole at BCC for his first ace.

The latest scores in the lower divisions showed AAV-Robros-Ventures Link up by one over Mizuno-Beeline Helicopters in the Fil Flight A, 117-116, and Matikas' 83 leading Am Flight A by three over Mikey's Bar, 104-101.

Marinduque will be fielding brothers Jay and Rufino Bayron, Mario Labajo, Fernando and Ababa today. Joining Tonyt are Tonton Asistio, Gene Bondoc, Mike Bibat and Korean-Canadian Chun Il-jin, touted as the surprise package of Southwoods.



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Wide-open Presidential Gold Cup race at San Lazaro Sunday

TWO GALLOPERS, BOTH FORMER CHAMPIONS, head the list of bidders in this year's running of the P2.4-million PCSO Presidential Gold Cup this Sunday at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite.

Despite the entry of past winners Empire King and Real Spicy, pundits still see the 35th edition of the country's most prestigious derby as anybody's race.

Defending champion Real Spicy fared poorly against crack imports in the recent Ambassador Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. Cup at the same venue while 2004 titlist Empire king finished dead last in the SMB-Marho Breeders' Cup Classic three weeks ago.

Looming as the horse to beat is Native Land, a six-year-old galloper who posted a rousing Breeders' Cup win over 2,050-meters, the same distance as the Gold Cup.

His time of 2:09 flat was just a fraction off the track record set last year by Real Spicy.

In addition to Native Land, other contenders in the derby, which guarantees P1.5-million to the winner, include the strong-performing Batong Silyar and Mr. Victory, as well as group standouts Tellmenolies and Sound of Silence.

Edgar Mendez, Contributor

Clark Discovery Race Saturday

ADVENTURE RACERS WILL VIE FOR THE championship in the Clark Discovery Race this Saturday and Sunday at the Clark Freeport Zone in Pampanga.

Teams of two and solo racers must complete a 60-kilometer course involving sports such as running, mountain biking, trekking, rope skills, land navigation and other physical challenges.

The eight-hour race, patterned after the popular "Action Asia Challenge," will feature the all male, mixed and solo categories which have drawn 30 teams and 15 solo racers.

Cavite Int'l 7-cocker resumes

EXCITING MATCHES RESUME TODAY IN THE second round of the Cavite International 7-Cock Derby at the Cavite Coliseum Derby Center and Casino on Aguinaldo Highway in Bacoor.

Some 75 fights are rostered for the round.

Part of derby proceeds will be donated by former Sen. Ramon Revilla, derby host, to a chosen charitable institution.

SPORTSWATCH

All set to field their ace fighters are Mayor Nene Aguilar, Gerry Ramos, Benjamin Sablan ng Saipan, Richard Bates, Necy Katigbak, Ito Ynares, 2007 Bakbakan runner-up Pol Estrellado, Efren Canlas, Pabling Ballelos, Bobbit Ples, Rudy Salud, Lito Orillaza and William Co and Jun Pascual.

70 fights up in SJC derby today

A GUARANTEED PRIZE OF P400,000 WILL BE disputed today in another special 4-cock derby featuring 70 fights at the San Juan Coliseum.

Some 40 cockers and breeders from Rizal, Pampanga, Marikina, Pasig, Quezon City, Mandaluyong, Makati, Pateros and Tagig are seeing action, according to hosts Elmer Nepomuceno and Hermie Herrera.

Meanwhile, a guaranteed prize of P3 million awaits the winners in the SJC Rambulan 6-Cock Derby which sizzles on Dec. 10, 12, 15, 17 and 19, according to host Rodolfo Pineda.

Four courses for Eagle Ridge tilt

EAGLE RIDGE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB will use its four championship courses for the club's annual member-guest invitational tournament on Dec. 14 and 15.

The country's largest golf club will accommodate more than 600 players members and guests in the two-day event dubbed as Fore by Four Invitational.

Engineer Wini Gob, Eagle Ridge project director, said this will be the first time that Eagle Ridge will use the courses designed by Nick Faldo, Isao Aoki, Greg Norman and Andy Dye for its member-guest event.

"We want everybody to play under the same conditions and we have considered the very fickle weather of late to make the decision of not going more than two days," said Gob.

The members' published club handicap index for November 2007 will be used.

The guest shall submit his/her lowest Nov. 2007 handicap index in any club of which he/she is a member.

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More overseas investments seen

Peso reaches 42.12 as it extends gains

THE PESO YESTERDAY surged to a fresh seven-and-a-half year high of 42.12 against the US dollar on strong yearend overseas Filipino remittances and stock market inflows.

The local currency was also supported by the regional currency markets, which firmed up on prospects that the US Federal Reserve would slash interest rates again soon, thereby driving more funds to high-yielding Asian assets.

It gained another 18.5 centavos yesterday to close at its intra-day peak from Monday's closing rate of 42.305 against the greenback.

It is now trading at its strongest level since it touched 42.07 on June 6, 2000.

The peso, which has now appreciated by over 16 percent since ending at 49.03 last year, is by far Asia's best performing currency this year.

"The country's fundamentals are strong, and inflows are heavy [during] the past few days," said Roland Avante, treasurer at Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank.

Aside from the influx of strong remittances ahead of the Christmas season, stock market investments plowed in by foreign investors taking position for next year also kept the local currency buoyant against the US dollar.

The peso opened at its intra-day low of 42.35 and gained throughout the day without any resistance from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, currency traders said.

Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System amounted to $503.12 million, slightly lower than the previous day's $621.1 million.

Jonathan Ravelas of Banco de Oro-EPCI said the peso was boosted mainly by overseas remittances ahead of the Christmas season.

"The next barrier is at 42:$1, and after that, the next critical level is 41.50:$1," Ravelas said.

Trading was mostly upbeat for currencies across the region, led by the Indonesian rupiah, Philippine peso and the Malaysian ringgit even as the global markets remained jittery over the property downturn in the United States.

American Express Bank, in its latest weekly outlook, said recession-like conditions would probably force the Fed to cut interest rates again soon.

"In terms of US economic data, consumer confidence and housing have stayed under stress but the Thanksgiving holiday household spending seems to have been in line with downbeat expectations rather than disastrously weak," the bank said.

According to Deutsche Bank chief economist Michael Spencer, "lower interest rates in the US, unless matched by cuts in Asia, will tend to add to the pressure on Asian currencies to appreciate as the interest rate differential moves in a direction that would tend to attract fixed income investments in Asia." *Doris C. Dumlao*

With BSP set to further ease restrictions, banks may soon freely invest abroad

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas may soon allow "qualified" institutional investors to freely invest abroad—a move that is seen to minimize risks while it boosts an institution's asset allocation.

"Qualified" institutional investors include expanded commercial banks, listed financial institutions, mutual funds, multilateral and bilateral institutions, venture capital funds, state industrial corporations, insurance companies and pension funds.

Also, a qualified institution must have the expertise and financial muscle to evaluate and invest in global capital markets.

According to BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision and examination Nestor Espenilla Jr., the central bank has received a proposal from the Fund Managers Association of the Philippines (FMAP) seeking to scale back restrictions on overseas investments.

By freely engaging in investments abroad, local fund managers may avoid concentration risk, promote diversification and boost asset allocation, said Paul Joseph Garcia, FMAP head and ING Philippines chief investment officer.

"Limiting our options to instruments issued by Philippine entities will make our funds vulnerable to concentration risk," FMAP said. "A portfolio made up of Philippine stocks and bonds, however diversified it may be, would still be subject to concentration risk."

Espenilla said the central bank is now studying the proposal and may include it as part of the BSP's liberalization effort.

If the proposal pushes through, it will be "a very significant liberalization [step]," Espenilla added.

"Remember that the local market is now maturing from bank-based to capital market-based financing, and bank business is slowing because corporations are going to capital markets," he explained.

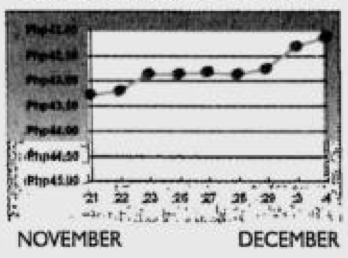
According to FMAP, investing in foreign assets will serve to improve the risk-reward profile of its client's portfolio.

"FMAP believes that one way of providing the best service to Filipino investors is to be able to offer them investment alternatives available not only in the Philippines but also those found in other countries," it said. "Banks and financial advisors have the responsibility of explaining to clients, in the clearest possible terms,

MORE OVERSEAS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

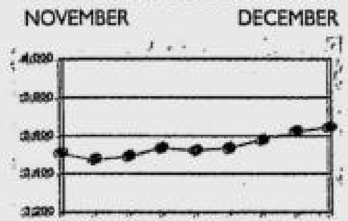


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 42.12 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Dec. 4, 2007

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close 0.5% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.5 percent higher on selective buying in blue chips, dealers said.

They said investors shrugged off Wall Street's weak performance Monday on renewed worries over the subprime mortgage crisis and focused on the likelihood that the US Federal Reserve would cut interest rates next week to boost the world's largest economy.

The composite index finished up 17.57 points at 3,644.45, near the day's high of

SHARES/ B2

BOC exceeds revenue target for November

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS has surpassed its revenue-collection target of P20.3 billion for November after registering shortfalls in the previous months.

Preliminary figures, according to Customs, showed that collections in November exceeded the target by P10 million. The initial figures took into account only the collections of major ports—Port of Manila, Manila International Container Port, Port of Batangas and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

The other ports, such as those in Cebu, Davao, Subic and Clark, have yet to submit their collection reports to the Office of the Commissioner, the BOC said.

The BOC—the second biggest revenue earner of the government after the Bureau of Internal Revenue—is hard-pressed to surpass its targets for November and December to offset the P15-billion shortfall recorded in the first 10 months of the year.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales earlier said measures were undertaken to help improve the agency's collection efficiency, including the installation of X-ray machines in the country's major ports which were hoped to make it easier to detect misdeclared shipments and underpaid duties.

Morales said shortfalls in the previous months were due to the appreciation of the peso, which dragged down the peso equivalent of the import duties collected. He said the government had been losing P2.7 billion in potential revenue whenever the local currency appreciated by one unit (one peso) against the US dollar.

The Department of Finance earlier reported that Customs collection stood at P171.7 billion in January to October, falling short of the P186.69-billion target for the period.

The BOC was tasked to collect P228.2 billion for the entire year to help the national government achieve its deficit-reduction goal, that is to limit the gap to P63 billion this year and post a balanced budget by next year. But because of the shortfalls in the tax collections of both the BOC and the BIR, the government has been relying more on the proceeds of its privatization program to stay on track of its fiscal goal.

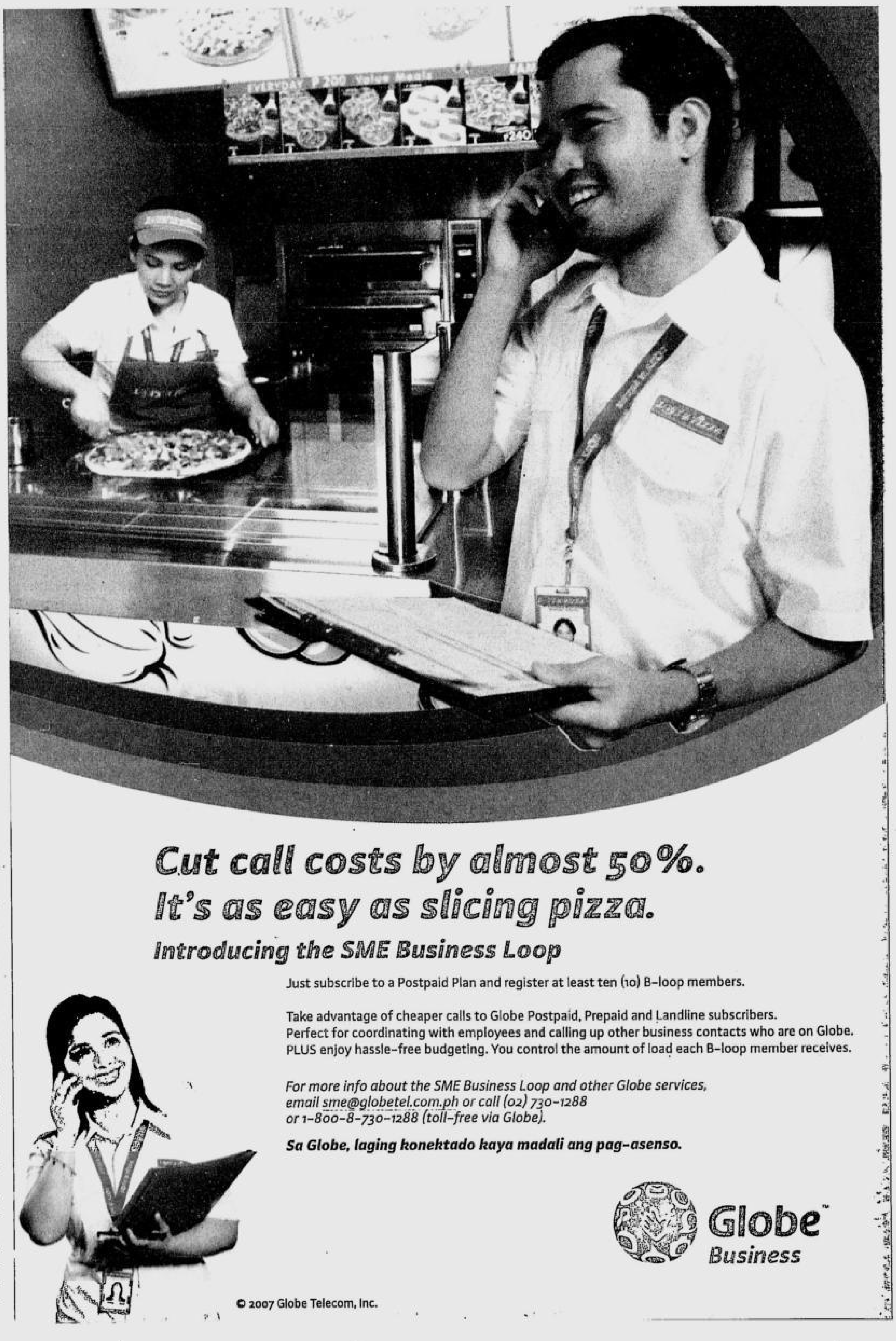
The BIR recorded a shortfall of P54.1 billion in January to October, collecting only P575.4 billion as against the target of P629.5 billion.

The DOF said the government had adopted the policy of selling state-owned assets that were deemed better run by the private sector, partly to boost revenues.

Recently, the government was able to sell its remaining 60-percent stake in PNOC-Energy Development Corp. for P58.5 billion. It also was able to dispose of its 46-percent interest in Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. for P25.2 billion, its minority stake in Philippine National Bank for nearly P1 billion and the old Iloilo airport property for P1.2 billion.

But critics are saying that the government may not rely on asset sale to sustain revenues.

Once the government runs out of major assets to sell, shortfalls in tax collection, if left unresolved, will derail efforts to balance the budget, they added.



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Gov't urged to reduce business taxes, simplify payment process

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS Council is calling on the government to reduce business taxes to levels comparable to those in other Southeast Asian countries, and ease the payment process to perk up business activities in the Philippines.

NCC cochair Cesar B. Bautista said in a briefing that addressing this matter had become more imperative as a study made by the World Bank, International Finance Corp. and PricewaterhouseCoopers showed the country as among those with the heaviest tax burden (135th of 178 countries).

The study titled "Paying Taxes 2008," which was an effort under the World Bank's Doing Business 2008 program, showed that the Philippines had a total business tax burden of 52.8 percent. This is an aggregate of corporate income tax (25.3 percent), labor tax (10 percent) and other taxes (17.6 percent).

Also, the study showed it ranked 126th of the 138 countries covered in terms of ease in paying taxes, with a company making 138 tax payment transactions and taking 64 days a year to comply.

"The government, with the help of the private sector, should study ways to improve the country's ranking," Bautista said.

The report, which was released on Nov. 19, showed that the island-nation of Vanuatu ranked No. 1 with a total business tax burden of only 8.4 percent.

Maldives topped the list in terms of ease of payment with just one transaction and an hour a year to comply.

Bautista said that, while these top-rank figures might not be feasible in the Philippines, the country should have a tax burden closer to those of its neighbors in the region.

Indonesia ranked 63rd with a total tax rate of 37.3 percent while Thailand placed 66th with 37.7 percent.

As for ease of payment, Malaysia ranked 55th with 93 payments taking 54 hours a year, while Thailand placed 89th with 104 transactions that take 93 hours a year.

"To be globally competitive, the Philippines should be at least within the top third of this ranking," Bautista said.

In a joint press statement, the three sponsors of the study said tax reforms that would make it easier for firms to pay taxes could increase government revenues by broadening the tax base.

The World Bank, IFC and PWC cited as instructive the case of Egypt, which two years ago implemented major tax reforms. These include the reduction of the corporate income tax rate by almost half, resulting in increased government tax base and revenues.

The study found that globally, on the average, a company spends almost two months a year complying with tax regulations—15 days for corporate income taxes, 21 for labor taxes and contributions and 21 for consumption taxes.

"The findings demonstrate that, when considering reforms, the governments need to look at all taxes paid by companies," the sponsors said.

"Corporate income tax is only a part of the story, accounting for only 37 percent of the total tax rate, 26 percent of the number of hours spent on tax compliance and 12 percent of the number of tax payments."

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8th wholesale aggregator license OKd

By Abigail L. Ho

AS THE INDUSTRY DRAWS CLOSER to the implementation of retail competition and open access, the Energy Regulatory Commission has awarded the country's eighth wholesale aggregator license to TeaM (Philippines) Energy Corp. (TPEC), a subsidiary of TeaM Energy Corp.

In a statement posted on its website, the ERC said the resolution approving TPEC's appointment as a wholesale aggregator was approved on Nov. 7.

As a wholesale aggregator, the ERC said TPEC could consolidate the power demand of distribution utilities for the purpose of purchasing and reselling electricity on a per group basis.

"The registration of TPEC as a wholesale aggregator is an indication of the growing investor confidence in the electricity business in the country," ERC chair Rodolfo Albano said.

Registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission since Aug. 11, 1992, TPEC was established primarily "to develop, design, construct, erect, assemble, commission, own, operate, maintain, rehabilitate and manage gas-turbine and other power generating plants and related facilities."

The firm later amended its articles of incorporation to include the business of supplying and delivering electricity and providing services necessary to electricity supply and delivery.

TPEC is backed by one of the country's biggest independent power producers, TeaM Energy, which is a partnership between Tokyo Electric Power Co. and Marubeni Corp.

TeaM Energy acquired the assets of Mirant Corp. in the Philippines last year.

The company now owns and operates the 1,200-MW Sual and the 735-MW Pagbilao coal-fired power plants in Pangasinan and Quezon, respectively. It also holds a 20-percent stake in the Ilijan gas-fired power facility.

The other authorized wholesale aggregators are Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp., First Cabanatuan Ventures Corp., Aboitiz Energy Solutions Inc., First Gen Energy Solutions Inc., Angeles Power Inc., iN2Power Inc. and GNPower Ltd. Co.

Memo to Senator Enrile on antitrust

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

SEN. JUAN PONCE ENRILE heads a subcommittee assigned to draft an antitrust law. Twice before, in the 13th and 14th Congress, antitrust bills died in committee.

Presumably, the lobbies against the bills were too strong for our politicians to repel. Let us hope this third try will finally succeed. The law is sorely needed and long overdue.

Trust is an American term. The Europeans call it cartel, which is the term more commonly known here. The Constitution and the Penal Code use the wording "combination in restraint of trade."

Simply put, a trust, cartel, or combination in restraint of trade exists when two or more suppliers or manufacturers agree not to compete among themselves.

The most common trust is on price. The members agree to charge exactly the same price for their services or goods.

The other kind of trust is when members agree to sell only in their own respective market areas. For example, only one cement manufacturer may be allowed to sell in Northern Luzon.

Still another kind of trust is when the members agree on the kind of products each member will manufacture. For instance, diesel engine manufacturers collude that a member will be restricted to 50 hp models; another will make only 100 hp models, and so forth.

Trusts should not be allowed to exist because they are notoriously inefficient. As a result, the consumer ends up paying unduly high prices for lousy services and/or shoddy products.

We have antitrust laws. Section 16 of the Constitution says, "No combinations in restraint of trade or unfair competition shall be allowed."

More specific is Article 186 of the Revised Penal Code. Any person found guilty of taking part in a monopoly or trust, as clearly spelled out in the law, goes to jail for six months and/or is fined a maximum of P6,000.

If the offense affects any food substance, motor fuel, or lubricants, or other articles of prime necessity, the penalty can be as long as 12 years.

It seems that, every time the gasoline companies raise, or lower, their prices simultaneously, their CEOs run the risk of rotting in jail for 12 years.

However, my lawyer tells me no complaint has ever been filed against anybody under Article 186. The members of a cartel are very powerful entities. An ordinary consumer who goes after a cartel will be like Don Quixote jousting with windmills.

Where will you find a daring consumer who will fight the mighty international gasoline firms? As a result, there is absolutely no local jurisprudence on Article 186. The law might as well have been written with invisible ink.

Only the government can fight cartels. The best way to get Article 186 implemented is to set up an agency like the Anti-Trust Division of the US Department of Justice. The division is so dreaded by American business that even Bill Gates, the richest man in the world, does not dare tangle with it.

Sometime ago, there was a huge conference in Glasgow to establish international rules on the conduct of nuclear plant insurance, an entirely new line. When the body tabled a proposal on premium rates, the Americans politely walked out.

If they took part, as soon as they returned to New York, the Anti-Trust Division would have bundled them straight to jail. A few years back, Filipino telecom firms met in Honolulu and agreed on prices. They frantically fled back home before the Anti-Trust Division could collar them.

The law that the Enrile subcommittee is drafting should not be directed toward the oil industry only, as reported in the press. The proposed law should target all sorts of cartels, particularly those of the cement and the banking industries.

For over a hundred years, a tight and strict cartel ran the fire insurance business here. In fact, it was the only cartel in our history that had a government license. Then, in 1994, in line with the Asean free trade agreements, the Insurance Commission withdrew the license and broke up the cartel.

In a free-wheeling open market, fire insurance prices started plummeting.

Today, premiums are 80 percent lower than in 1994. And yet, the industry is flourishing as it has never been before.

Antitrust legislation (so long as it is doable) is good for everybody—including the members of the cartel. And since the law will serve the consuming public, it is also good politics.

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Benpres buys back $43-M debt

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

BENPRES HOLDINGS CORP. HAS TRIMMED its debt through a buyback of some $43 million in debt held largely by a foreign fund.

In a disclosure, Benpres president Angel Ong said the firm and its major shareholder, Lopez Inc., jointly bought back Benpres' debt from Asian Infrastructure Fund (AIF) at a discount or for $32 million.

Benpres paid $25.8 million while Lopez Inc. shouldered the balance of $6.4 million.

The $43-million debt acquired from AIF accounts for 10 percent of the total outstanding principal debt of Benpres, which is 54.6-percent owned by Lopez Inc.

Ong said Benpres also purchased P9.5 million worth of debts from five long term commercial papers (LTCP) holders for only P5.8 million.

"Benpres continues to pursue discussions with various creditors with a view of retiring debts or entering into restructured financing agreements," Ong said.

As of Dec. 31, 2006, Benpres has $400 million in debts broken down as follow: P2 billion in LTCPs; $150 million in euro bonds (7.875 percent notes) and the obligations of subsidiaries, including Bayan Telecommunications Inc., amounting to $210 million.

More overseas ...

From page B1

the potential risks involve."

For the first time since the Asian currency crisis, the BSP started to ease restrictions on capital outflows since April this year to prevent a potential overheating—or a situation of rapid economic growth with runaway inflation—caused by strong influx of foreign money pumped in by overseas Filipino workers and foreign investors' placements in the local stock, bond and money markets.

The BSP earlier doubled the maximum amount that local companies can invest abroad using foreign exchange sourced from the banking system to $12 million from $6 million per year.

This transaction may now be undertaken without requiring approval from the BSP's policymaking Monetary Board.

But the biggest component of the first wave of liberalization implemented last April was the increase in banks' allowable foreign currency purchases as a share of unencumbered capital—known as the overbought limit—from 2.5 percent or $5 million whichever is lower, to a pre-Asian crisis ratio of 20 percent or $50 million whichever is lower.

This was matched by a similar 20-percent, or $50-million, limit—whichever is lower—on the oversold position or the amount of dollars banks are allowed to sell to the open market.

Espenilla said big banks and financial institutions are now seeking more opportunities in wealth management and financial advisory.

He added that the circular being prepared by the BSP on the next wave of forex liberalization is "the thickest by far."

Shares close 0.5% higher

From page B1

3,648.68.

The broader all-share index gained 7.94 points to 2,215.40.

Gainers beat losers, 62 to 44, while 69 stocks ended flat.

A total of 1.6 billion shares worth P3.8 billion ($89 million) changed hands.

"Investors are expecting the Fed to cut rates next week and the local central bank may follow suit," said James Lago of Westlink Global Equities.

Also, investors sought stocks with attractive valuations, said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

"The market still looks good fundamentally and a lot of stocks are offering good discounts," he said. *AFP*

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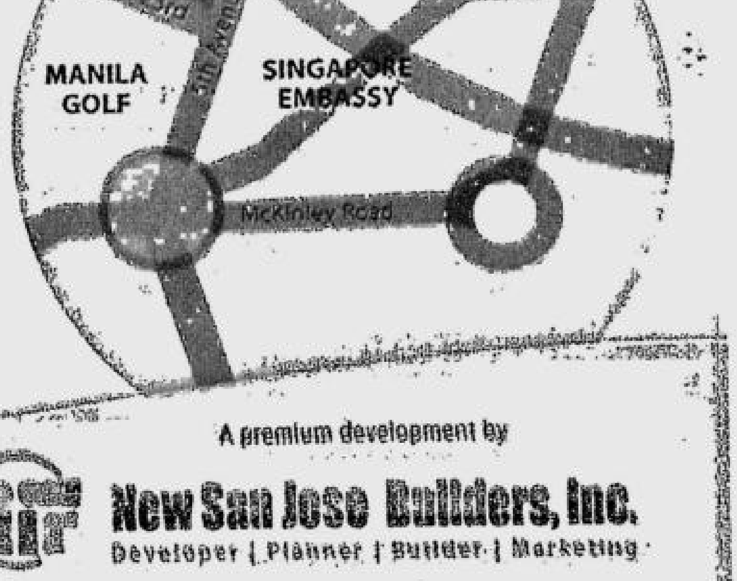

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PSE approves Empire East stock rights offer program

Proceeds to go to property acquisition, debt payment

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXchange (PSE) has approved the plan of real estate development firm Empire East Land Holdings Inc. (EELHI) to raise P2.7 billion through a one-for-three stock rights offer.

In a circular to brokers, the PSE said it had approved EELHI's plan to issue up to 2.719-billion common shares covering its stock rights offer at an offer price of P1 each.

EELHI is 46-percent controlled by Megaworld Corp.

Under the program, investors can buy one share for P1 for every three shares owned as of Dec. 20, the proposed record date.

EELHI shares closed yesterday at 82 centavos each.

The offer period has been tentatively set for Jan. 7-11 with the listing date scheduled for Jan. 21.

Megaworld and BDO Securities, as stockholders of the company, have committed to jointly purchase shares that will not be sold during the offer period.

Proceeds of the rights offer will be used to accelerate the development and construction of the company's projects, retire debt and acquire new pieces of property for development, the company said in a previous disclosure.

For 2008, EELHI said it may spend P1.5 billion as development cost for new and existing projects, while an estimated P900 million will fund land banking.

It was also estimated that 20 million of the company's shares worth some P16 million will be bought as part of a buyback program in 2008.

Then approximately P1.13 billion in 2008 may be spent to pay debts.

EELHI expects its income to grow 9.9 percent to P271.26 million by the end of 2007 from P246.8 million in 2006, based on disclosures to the stock exchange.

EELHI also said earlier that it would spend roughly P7 billion to P8 billion in the next five years to build condominiums catering mainly to the middle income earners.

EELHI president Anthony Charlemagne Yu had said this five-year budget plan translates to roughly P1.5 billion a year, which will be financed mainly by internally generated funds.

Yu said Empire East plans to soon presell two condominium projects targeting those who can afford units costing P1-3 million each.

Viva earmarks IPO proceeds for new films

MOVIE PRODUCER VIVA COMMUNICATIONS Inc. is gearing up to produce six films in the first quarter of next year using part of the proceeds from a planned initial public offering.

Viva Com said in documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission that close to 39 percent of the net IPO proceeds, or roughly P423 million, would be spent for content creation and acquisition, specifically the production of six films.

Viva Com plans to co-produce two movies with Star Cinema Productions with a budget of about P34 million each.

The four other films will be produced by the company at a budget of roughly P21.5 million a movie.

In the first half of 2008, Viva Com is also allotting P60 million for the production of 10 concerts by foreign and local artists.

Viva Com expects to raise an estimated P1 billion in fresh capital from a primary offer of shares set from Jan. 14 to 18 next year.

The company is offering 142.9 million shares at between P9.72 and P12.93 apiece.

Of the total offer, approximately 92.86 million will comprise of primary or new shares that could raise up to P1.2 billion for the company at the maximum price range proposed.

Roughly 35 percent of the company will be sold to the public through the primary offer.

Aside from content creation, roughly 22 percent of the net IPO proceeds or P240 million will be spent for content production and distribution - including producing programming for three additional cable channels that use content from Viva Com's film library - restoration of the company's film library and purchase of archiving equipment.

The rest of the IPO proceeds will go to the training and development of artists and talents and the payment of existing loans and payables.

Viva Com was established in 1981 to consolidate the Viva Group of Companies' dominant position as the leading provider of entertainment content for Filipino audiences in various media all over the world.

Viva Com is composed of film production arm Viva Productions Inc., talent development and management company Viva Artists' Agency and home video distributor Viva Video Inc. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

CURRENCIES

December 4, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.681570	1.000000	42.3620
Japan	Yen	0.006171	0.009054	0.3835
United Kingdom	Pound	1.408124	2.066000	87.5199
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.087514	0.128401	5.4393
Switzerland	Franc	0.605087	0.887784	37.6083
Canada	Dollar	0.681638	1.000100	42.3662
Singapore	Dollar	0.470016	0.689608	29.2132
Australia	Dollar	0.601510	0.882535	37.3859
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.819948	2.670227	113.1162
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.183312	0.268955	11.3935
Brunei	Dollar	0.468401	0.687238	29.1128
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000073	0.000107	0.0045
Thailand	Baht	0.022259	0.032658	1.3835
UAE	Dirham	0.185658	0.272398	11.5393
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.467200	62.1535
Korea	Won	0.000737	0.001081	0.0458
China	Yuan**	0.092073	0.135089	5.7226
Denmark	Kroner	0.134102	0.196754	8.3349
India	Rupee	0.017303	0.025387	1.0754
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.203211	0.298151	12.6303
New Zealand	Dollar	0.522476	0.766577	32.4737
Sweden	Kroner	0.106420	0.156140	6.6144
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.021124	0.030993	1.3129

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Dec. 3, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Dec. 3, 2007

Philex Mining Corporation
NOTICE OF POSTPONEMENT

TO OUR STOCKHOLDERS:

This is to notify you that on 3 December 2007, the Board of Directors of PHILEX MINING CORPORATION resolved to postpone the special stockholders meeting scheduled on 6 December 2007 at 2:00 p.m. as follows:

New Date : Thursday, 24 January 2008
Time : 2:00 p.m.
Venue : Ballroom A, Crowne Plaza, Galleria Manila, Ortigas Avenue corner ADB Avenue, Quezon City

Stockholders who have not yet submitted proxies may submit their proxies to the Office of the Corporate Secretary on or before Monday, 21 January 2008.

The postponement is due to the insufficiency of time to gather the required proxies.

BARBARA ANNE C. MIGALLOS
Corporate Secretary

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 4, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.4	23,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	58.5	58.5	58	58.5	1,429,600
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	62.5	63	62	62.5	4,106,500
748	544	China Banking Corp.	670	675	665	670	5,390
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank.	23	23	21	23	1,100
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	140,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	57	59	57	59	2,591,400
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	43.5	44.5	43.5	44.5	162,100
68	46	Philippine Savings Bank	60.5	60.5	60.5	60.5	2,200
39.57	20	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	284,500
90	63	Security Bank Corp.	71	72.5	71	72.5	640,400
68	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	44	44	43.5	44	581,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.96	1.98	1.96	1.98	45,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.5	11.75	245,300
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.95	169,000
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.1	3.2	3.05	3.2	2,468,000
3.1	1.32	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	11,000
1,390.00	260	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,080.00	1,140.00	1,080.00	1,140.00	1,410
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.5	418,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	1,055,000
0.57	0.22	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.35	570,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	59	62.5	59	60.5	1,059,400
92	51.5	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	67	72	67	72	2,493,800
17.5	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	16.75	17.25	16.75	17.25	4,774,200
105.45	27.73	Manila Electric Company	76.5	79.5	76.5	77.5	3,018,100
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	7.1	7.1	6.9	6.9	4,280,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	6	6.1	5.9	6	3,937,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7	7.3	7	7.3	12,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.4	1.4	5,518,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.8	137,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.52	1.58	570,000
61	39.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	52	52	51.5	51.5	384,400
9.1	5.7	Pancake House Inc.	8.8	9	8.8	9	2,000
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	900,000
3.15	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.75	2.8	2.75	2.75	580,000
60	42.5	San Miguel Corp. A	50.5	50.5	50	50	72,500
88	43	San Miguel Corp. B	50.5	51.5	50.5	50.5	411,800
0.66	0.33	Swift Foods Inc.	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.45	150,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	14.75	14.75	14.5	14.75	2,138,400
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	60,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
19.5	7.3	Concrete Aggregates Corp. A	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.5	5,000
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.6	4.65	4.55	4.65	647,000
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	2,157,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	1	1.02	1	1.02	1,114,000
23	1.7	TKC Steel Corp.	8.9	8.9	8.6	8.6	557,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.76	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.2	4.25	4.2	4.25	316,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.17	Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.37	1,640,000
9	6.2	Splash Corp.	6.4	6.7	6.4	6.6	609,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp. - Phil. Deposit Receipts	33.5	34	33.5	33.5	66,000
0.185	0.055	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.125	23,730,000
1.28	0.29	APC Group Inc.	0.61	0.66	0.61	0.64	4,460,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.48	2.5	2.48	2.5	177,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	49,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	35,000,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.9	5,107,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	9,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.5	19,182,000
1.38	0.59	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	100,000
1.5	0.38	Asia Amalgamated Holdings Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	80,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.48	2.5	2.46	2.48	1,863,000
8	0.8	Arias Prime Resources Inc.	3	3	3	3	1,000
645	400	Ayala Corp.	570	570	565	565	205,300
15.25	7.39	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	13.25	13.25	12.5	12.75	48,000
5.8	1.64	Benpres Holdings Corp.	4	4.1	4	4.05	7,171,000
12	5.1	DMCI Holdings Inc.	10	10	10	10	66,000
8	3.25	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	7,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	24,000
14.5	8.9	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.5	10.25	10.25	634,200
2.6	1.28	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. A	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	20,000
2.65	1.42	Keppel Philippines Holdings Inc. B	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	25,000
22.75	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	20	22.75	20	22.75	4,145,100
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.4	6.4	6.1	6.2	890,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	19,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. A	0.26	0.26	0.245	0.26	136,980,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	2,500,000
452.5	268.53	SM Investments Corp.	342.5	342.5	337.5	340	91,650
0.73	0.14	Sinophil Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	790,000
1.06	0.61	Solid Group Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.62	0.62	100,000
2	0.92	South China Resources Inc.	1.5	1.58	1.4	1.58	21,000
0.75	0.12	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.31	14,530,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	1	A Brown Company Inc.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.5	449,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	250,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	15.75	15.5	15.75	39,153,600
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	122,000
4.7	3.05	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	10,000
2.7	1.25	Cityland Development Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	30,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.58	0.6	510,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.36	0.36	4,100,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.78	0.82	0.76	0.82	105,380,000
6.9	1.08	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	5,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Res. and Hold'gs Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.24	4,580,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	1.04	1.08	1.04	1.04	6,776,000
2.44	1.3	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.48	1.54	1.48	1.5	65,392,000
0.49	0.11	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
2.9	1.18	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	30,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	300,000
4.6	2.05	Megaworld Corp.	4	4.15	4	4.1	34,458,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	3.85	3.9	3.75	3.85	278,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp. - Warrants	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.65	862,000
0.7	0.13	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.34	17,020,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.45	300,000
9.2	1.7	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	25,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.25	2,787,800
5.9	1.93	SM Development Corp.	4	4	4	4	622,000
13.5	7.76	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.5	11	11.5	7,443,000
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.22	2.22	101,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	1.92	2	1.82	1.9	723,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.55	0.59	0.55	0.59	1,850,000
0.49	0.09	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	5,671,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	34	34.5	34	34.5	66,700
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	7.9	8.3	7.9	8.2	2,122,000
11.75	7.5	GMA Network Inc.	8	8.2	8	8.2	314,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.36	1.48	1.36	1.36	62,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,550.00	1,600.00	1,550.00	1,600.00	42,690
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,060.00	3,105.00	3,045.00	3,090.00	105,890
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7	7.1	6.8	7.1	2,162,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	1,100,000
15.5	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	13	14	12.75	14	1,685,000
11.5	3.25	IPVG Corp.	8.6	8.8	8.5	8.6	895,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.038	0.039	0.038	0.038	32,700,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	3	3.2	3	3.2	57,000
2.9	1.1	Ionics Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	4,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	3,780,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.36	150,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.047	0.048	0.047	0.048	61,600,000
5.8	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.55	2.7	2.5	2.65	2,369,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.3	1.5	1.28	1.3	3,243,000
6.8	3.6	Asian Terminals Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	25,000
49	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	47.5	47.5	44	44	918,200
2.7	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.8	2.7	1.8	2.14	63,962,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.42	2.48	2.3	2.3	393,000
1.34	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.18	1.34	1.18	1.3	47,716,000
1.2	0.55	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.88	0.88	0.87	0.88	1,160,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	[illegible]
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
41	6.6	JTH Davies Holdings Inc.	23	23	20	20	6,600
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.8	11,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.25	11.25	11	11	53,100
30	6.2	Paxys Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.4	6.4	316,000
472.5	390	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	420	422.5	420	420	9,330
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	145,000,000
7.2	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	212,000
7.4	3.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	7.1	7.1	7	7	32,000
21.25	7.8	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13.25	14.25	13	14	1,064,200
16	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	16	16	14	14.75	237,000
35	24	Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	2,800
12.75	1.96	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	9.5	9.7	9.1	9.1	95,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.88	1.9	1.86	1.86	14,200,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.53	0.54	0.51	0.54	107,100,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.59	0.59	0.57	0.58	40,270,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	104,700,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	3,200,000
30	3.6	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	20.5	20.5	20	20.25	402,800
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	119,000,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp. - Warrants	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	0.0095	17,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.8	2,303,000
49.5	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	44	44	44	44	4,300
1.36	0.55	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.66	0.74	0.66	0.7	3,590,000
1.8	0.85	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.1	191,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	600,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	70,000,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	10	10	10	10	27,000
0.032	0.0095	The Philodrill Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	62,100,000

	AVERAGES		VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	884.87 UP	5.63	13,325,800	594,306,595.00
Industrial	4,304.83 UP	35.76	39,258,600	735,875,735.00
Holding Firms	2,024.82 UP	0.41	315,967,250	468,453,030.00
Property	1,615.25 UP	14.67	299,866,600	1,126,381,680.00
Service	1,860.20 UP	6.22	225,112,510	702,761,150.00
Mining & Oil	8,566.39 DOWN	0.94	674,331,100	170,479,455.00
All Shares Index	2,215.40 UP	7.94		
PSEI	3,644.45 UP	17.57		
		GRAND TOTALS	1,567,861,860	3,798,257,645.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH
SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Take one look at the planet and you'll see why the merger between Transocean and GlobalSantaFe is the right decision at the right time. It does more than just create the world's largest offshore drilling company. It is, in fact, a milestone in the history of offshore drilling. Never before have two companies come together to create so many opportunities for employees, customers and shareholders.

That's because new and significant discoveries will almost certainly come in deeper water and harsh environments under increasingly trying circumstances. At the same time existing shallow water fields must be completely developed.

Success in these endeavors will require a company with a deeper and more geographically diverse fleet of quality assets, a deeper and more experienced talent pool, and a broader array of offshore drilling services. And that pretty much describes the new Transocean.

The new Transocean. Perfectly designed for a world that is covered with water.

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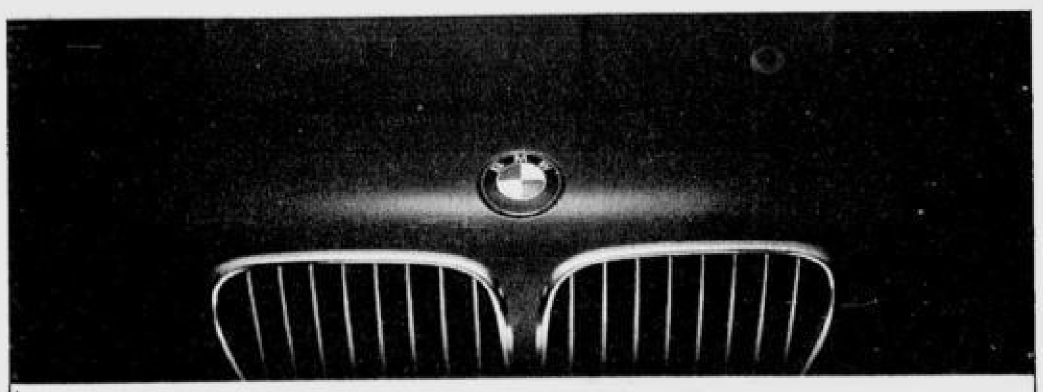

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- With excellent interpersonal skills

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- Graduate of an Automotive Technology or related course
- With at least 1 year experience in an automotive dealership
- With excellent interpersonal skills

Warranty Processor
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- With at least 3 years experience as a technician in an automotive dealership

CRD Clerk
- Female, between 21 to 30 years old
- Marketing or Mass Communications Graduate
- With excellent interpersonal skills

Interested applicants are requested to email their updated resumes on or before Dec. 15,2007 to **hrd@klassikbmw.com.ph**

Human Resources Department
Klassik BMW
20 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City

SAGITTARIUS MINES, INC.

Tampakan Copper - Gold Project

ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNICAL SUPERINTENDENT

The Tampakan Copper-Gold Project is a large scale mine development project at feasibility stage. It is located approximately 65 km north-northwest of General Santos City on the island of Mindanao and is managed by Sagittarius Mines, Inc. (SMI).

General Santos has a population of approximately 500,000 people and is accessed by sealed highways, a major deep water port within Sarangani Bay and a modern international airport.

A vacancy currently exists for an Environmental Technical Superintendent based in General Santos City. Reporting to the Resident Manager, the role will preferably have a minimum of 8 - 10 years exposure to environmental management in a mining or industrial setting.

Key responsibilities will include:
- Leadership and development of a team of professionals to ensure the Company's continued compliance and adherence to all relevant statutes, licences, and agreements
- Delivery of a structured Environmental Management System consistent with the principles of ISO14001
- Participation in environmental audits (EMS, Compliance, Sustainability and others)
- Gain the necessary environmental approvals for SMI to sustainably conduct its business, including but not limited to, Environmental Certificates of Compliance and SMI EPA licences
- Management and timely delivery of key information inputs to a range of stakeholders required as part of the Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
- Regular communication and report updates to senior site management and Xstrata Copper Project Development Team
- Provision of sound technical advice to SMI exploration teams and other departments on environmental management issues
- Liaison with Philippine statutory agencies and the general community on environmental performance and associated activities
- Effective management of resources and prudent exercise of cost controls on operating and capital budgets within own area of responsibility
- Contractor / consultant management

The ideal candidate should :
- Have a strong educational background in environmental engineering, environmental management or natural resource management
- Have at least 5 years experience in a managerial position
- Be proficient in the use of a range of software applications including Microsoft Access, Excel, Powerpoint, MapInfo (GIS) and Internet
- Possess sound problem solving, time management and interpersonal skills
- Have well developed communication abilities
- Be strongly oriented on safety and workplace standards
- Exercise a high level of confidentiality
- Demonstrate an ability to lead people and manage resources according to plans and schedules
- Be highly self-motivated with a strong desire to achieve successful outcomes

Submissions are to include a letter of application and CV highlighting professional strengths, qualifications and employment history. Applications close 14 December 2007 and should be emailed or sent to:

HUMAN RESOURCES
Sagittarius Mines, Inc.
JPM Building, Bula-Lagao Road
General Santos City
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Fax No : (083) 552-8405
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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the public that the following personalities whose pictures appear above are no longer connected with **Cleveland Envirotech Solutions, Inc.**:

Name (from left to right):	*Effectivity Date of Resignation:*
Bernie S. Chua	September 30, 2007
Eva M. Sagkal	October 15, 2007
Chrisabelle Joy S. Francisco	October 31, 2007
Alicia G. Mendoza	October 31, 2007
= Not in Photos =	
Manuel J. Funa, Jr.	October 12, 2007
John John R. Morales	October 12, 2007
Jayson R. Morales	October 12, 2007
Marshall M. Patilla	October 12, 2007

Any transaction entered into by these people for and in behalf of **Cleveland Envirotech Solutions, Inc.** will not be honored effective the above mentioned dates.

(PDI - Dec. 5, 2007)

50th anniversary and reunion

CALLING ALL MEMBERS OF UST Medicine Class of 1957. You are all cordially invited to your "once in a lifetime" 50th Anniversary and Reunion at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza and the Manila Hotel on Dec. 13-15. For further details, call Dr. Ched Oliver 842-6549; Dr. Charito Prieto-Felipe 724-3244; Dr. Mameng Santos-Rivera 911-6595.

Manuel T. Peña, Jr.

peacefully joined his Creator
on December 2, 2007

He was born on October 14, 1930 at Bauang, La Union, married to Flordeliza Umahon †, and survived by his loving children and grandchildren, Bon and Thelma Meneses with Lyra and TJ, Reggie and Shee-ann, Angelica, Red, Noel and Pearly Peña with Tricia and Ryan, Philip, Pao, Agnes Cruz and Danny Contrerar with Karen and Edward, Byranne, Tom, Tim, Niño, Jun Peña with Crystal, Beth Peña, Bing Parilla, Kia and Charlotte.

He was a retired employee of 7-Up and Southern Beverage Corporation of the Syjuco Group of Companies.

Wake will be at Loyola Memorial-Guadalupe, Makati.
He will be cremated at 9.00 a.m. Friday, December 7
also in Loyola Guadalupe.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
DISPOSAL COMMITTEE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Notice is hereby given that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will sell **SCRAP MATERIALS** stored at the BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr. Sts., Malate, Manila thru sealed bids to be received by the Committee not later than ***10:00 A.M. on 13 December 2007*** at Room MR-2C, 2nd Floor, 5-Storey Building, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila.

Interested parties may inspect the aforesaid scrap materials before the bidding date.

Forms and further information may be obtained from the Committee's Executive Officer, Ms. Crisanta F. Reyes, Administrative Services Department, Room 105, Ground Floor, 5-Storey Building, BSP, A. Mabini cor. P. Ocampo Sr. Streets, Malate, Manila, Telephone No. 525-8161.

(Sgd.) **MA. ODILIA B. DEL CASTILLO**
Vice-Chairman

(PDI–Dec. 5, 2007)

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS

dti TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **BASIC R MFG INC.** with office/site address located **at 27 LOZADA HOMES NAGA ROAD PULANG LUPA, LAS PIÑAS CITY** is applying for registration with the Board of Investment (BOI) as **New Export Producer of Garments** with a capacity of **20,000 dozens/year** on a **Non-Pioneer Status.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this application.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and
Registration Department

(PDI - Dec. 5, 2007)

Standard Form Number: SF-Good-05
Revised on: July 28, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Health-Caraga, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/ manufacturers/ distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	: PROCUREMENT OF DRUGS & MEDS., MEDICAL LAB. EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES
Location	: DOH-CENTER FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT-CARAGA
Brief Description	: DRUGS & MEDS., MEDICAL LAB. EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES
Approved Budget For the Contract	: **PhP 12,226,041.33**
Contract Duration	:
Delivery Period	:

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last (state number of years, minimum 2) with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/ Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Jan. 5, 2008
2. Pre-bid Conference	Jan. 5, 2008
3. Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility (If single-stage bidding is used, delete this activity)	
4. Opening of Bids	Jan. 10, 2008
5. Bid Evaluation	Jan. 22, 2008
6. Post-qualification	Jan. 29, 2008
7. Notice of Award	From Feb. 14-21, 2008

For single-stage bidding:

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Two Thousand Pesos Only (PhP2,000.00)** for Drugs & Medicines and **One Thousand Pesos Only (Php1,000.00)** for Medical Laboratory Supplies and Equipment, to the Department of Health – Center for Health Development – Caraga Cashier Section.

The Department of Health – Center for Health Development – Caraga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **FLORMINDA B. TEJANO, DPA**
Chief Standards & Licensing Division

(PDI–Dec. 5 & 12, 2007)

INVITATION TO BID

WATER DAMAGED
"AMMONIUM SULPHATE" IN BAGS
(estimated weight: 176.930 M/Tons)
Location: PHILPHOS Whse., R. Castillo St., Davao City
December 14, 2007 (Friday)
2:00 p.m. @ MASCO Office, Makati City
For particulars, pls.contact:
Ding Placido &/or Tina Banal
@ MASCO 840-3669 / 813-0719 / 817-5428 / 817-4959

(PDI--Dec. 5, 2007)

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that SMACO Engineering (M) Sdn. Bhd. Representative Office located at:
3/F PMT Bldg., #32 Dr. Maldo del Rosario St.,
Kapasigan, Pasig City
is hereby to close its services effective December 1, 2007.
We published this to conform with SEC Rules and Regulation

The Management

(PDI--Dec. 5, 12 & 19, 2007)

Chinese car company puts up hub in Subic

GEELY GROUP, TOUTED AS CHINA'S FIRST independent automaker, has chosen the Subic Freeport as a distribution hub to introduce alternative low-priced sedans aimed at the middle class.

Geely Philippines president Joycelin Torres-Rodriguez said in a statement that Subic—reputed in the media as a major entry point of "smuggled" used vehicles—was chosen "for easy communications and negotiations."

Rodriguez said his company was assured of these factors given the newly completed container terminal in the free port.

She said 2,000 units of Geely hatchback and sedan models would be shipped through Subic for dealers and customers in Metro Manila, Pampanga, Bulacan and Dagupan City in Pangasinan.

Rodriguez said the cars—priced at P387,000 for the 1.1-liter hatchback and P489,999 for the 1.3-liter sedan—would be brought into Subic tax-paid, just like the car imports of mainstream distributors.

The Chinese-made cars would be aimed at the B-C-D income brackets.

Rodriguez said Geely planned to open 12 dealerships in the country, with the main showroom to be located in Quezon City.

He said Geely Philippines was also planning to set up an assembly plant in the Subic Freeport for semi-knock down units to take advantage of the incentives that the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority was offering to locators.

"The reason why there is a big discrepancy between car sales compared to our huge population is that there is no quality car available at prices affordable to families in the middle class," she said.

To attract buyers, the firm would offer both hatchback and sedan models on a five-year installment plan, with a deposit requirement of 20 percent or around P77,000.

Also, the firm has offered the SBMA and its subsidiary, Freeport Service Corp., a tie-up through bank financing to benefit SBMA employees and other Freeport workers.

The SBMA, according to Rodriguez, would go for a tie-up program because the cars would be entering the country through Subic Bay.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Petrolift postpones IPO plan to Q1 2008

PETROLIFT INC. IS POSTPONING a plan to hold an initial public offering (IPO) this month to the first quarter of 2008 as it assesses stock market conditions after the Peninsula Manila incident last Thursday.

In a letter to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Petrolift president Lawrence Leonio and underwriter BDO Capital & Investment Corp. president Eduardo Francisco said they were revisiting the firm's offering timetable "in view of the current volatility in the stock market."

Both officials requested the PSE to give them until Jan. 14, 2008 to submit a revised timetable.

The request was made after the PSE approved last Wednesday Petrolift's proposed public offer.

The listing of the shares was supposed to be on Dec. 19, with the public offer to be held from Dec. 10 to 14.

"Prospective investors, especially institutional accounts, both local and foreign, remain keen on the company's planned IPO. As such, Petrolift's IPO will be rescheduled at the soonest possible time," BDO Capital and Investment Corp. said.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

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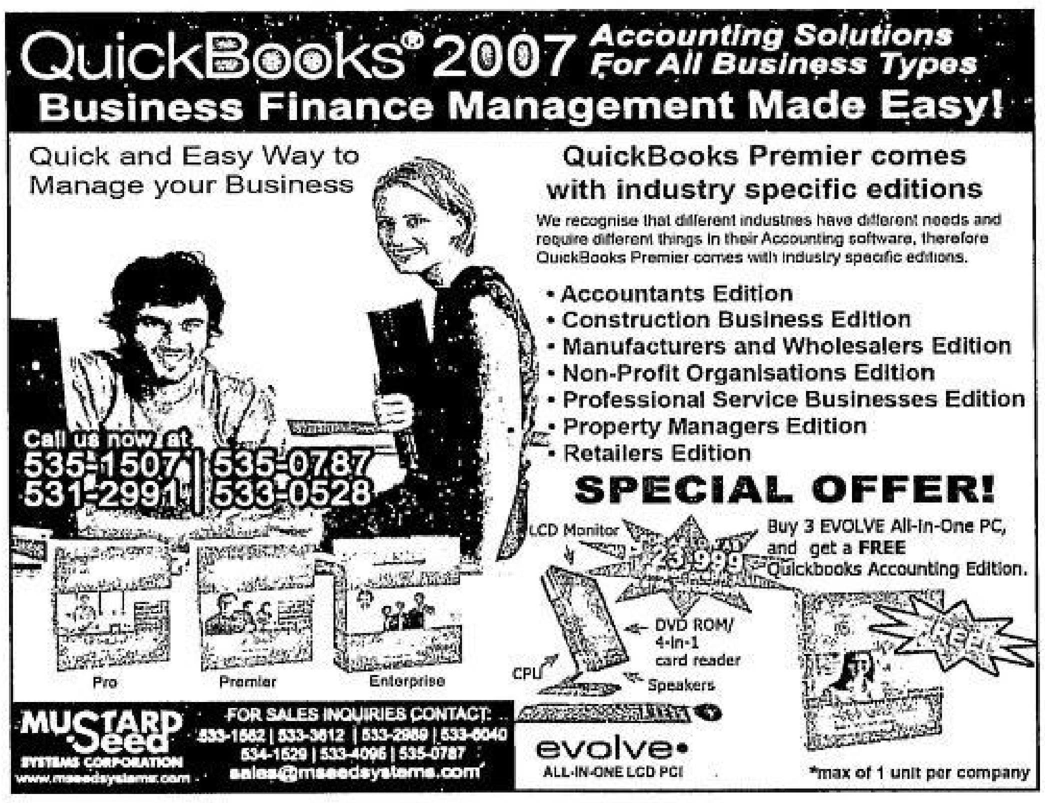
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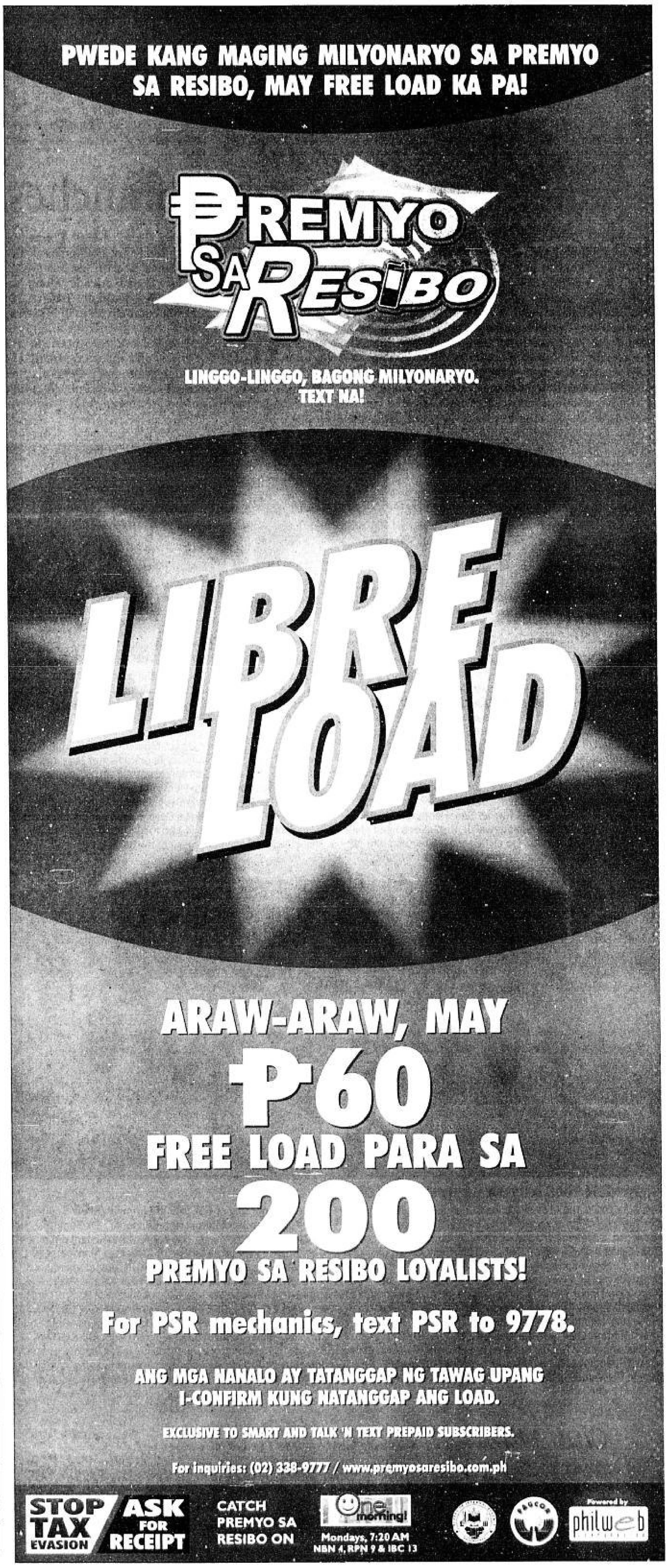
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‘Disney on Ice’ returns with an amazing journey

“DISNEY ON ICE” RETURNS TO the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City from Jan. 18 to 25. The much awaited show for the whole family is jam-packed with appearances by beloved Disney characters such as Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Donald and Daisy Duck, Peter Pan, Lilo & Stitch, Simba the Lion King, Ariel the Little Mermaid and many more of their friends. Its exciting and original effects will thrill audiences with an adventurous journey through some of Disney’s most beloved stories which are sure to delight the entire family.

“Disney On Ice” presents “Mickey & Minnie’s Amazing Journey” combined with familiar tunes from Disney’s “Peter Pan” and “The Little Mermaid” along with new favorites from Disney’s “Lilo & Stitch” and the Academy Award-winning songs from “The Lion King” that the whole family will surely recognize.

Each scene brings the story to an unusual and inviting new location, including a dreamy London cityscape, a colorful tropical island, an underwater kingdom and the untamed savannah of Africa. Audiences will experience the madcap mischief of Peter Pan’s “Lost Boys”, an upbeat hula with “Lilo and Stitch”, the easy-going “Hakuna Matata” of Simba and friends, and a reggae-spiced romp led by Sebastian of Disney’s “The Little Mermaid”.

“It’s an extraordinary show, an adventure through imagination and a family vacation all rolled into one incredible night,” says producer Kenneth Feld. “You really get a sense you are traveling right alongside Mickey, Minnie and their friends. At the end, without ever leaving your seat, you feel like you’ve toured London, taken a dip in the sea, joined a safari, and enjoyed a Hawaiian luau.” Book your tickets as early as possible! For reservations, call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph.

PNB PARTNERS WITH SUNWESTVILLE

The Philippine National Bank recently signed an agreement with Sunwestville Realty and Development Corp at the PNB Head Office in Pasay City. This partnership officially accredits the developer under the Own a Philippine Home Loan (OPHL) and Sure Home Loan (SHL) Programs of the Bank. Two of Sunwestville's projects, the Misibis Resorts, Estate & Spa, and Renaissance Gardens, both in Legazpi, Albay, were also given accreditation. Filipinos abroad who want to acquire Sunwestville properties can now go to PNB branches within their locality for their housing loan needs. Present during the MOA signing are (from left): PNB FSVP and consumer finance sector head Jovencio Hernandez; PNB EVP and chief credit officer Renato Castillo; Omar Byron T. Mier, president and CEO of PNB; Elizaldy Co, president and CEO of Sunwestville; and Mylene Recinto-Co, SVP of Sunwestville.

Plantersbank opens new branches

PLANTERS DEVELOPMENT BANK (Plantersbank) recently opened two new branches-one in upscale Madrigal Business Park in Ayala Alabang and another servicing the eastern Manila growth corridor in Taytay, Rizal-to meet the rising demand for its specialized banking services by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in these areas.

“Our know-how, services and business solutions are geared towards helping our SME clients to better manage and succeed in today’s competitive market,” according to Plantersbank senior vice president and head of branch banking Roberto A. Buhain. He described the latest branch expansion effort as “a testament of our commitment to make our services more accessible to Filipino entrepreneurs.”

Plantersbank Alabang branch is located on the corner of Finance and Industry Streets in Madrigal Business’ Park, Ayala Alabang in Muntinlupa City. Plantersbank Taytay branch is open for business in the East Road Arcade along the Manila East Road in Tikling, the thriving commercial area of Taytay, Rizal.

Plantersbank has been in the business of supporting small and medium-scale entrepreneurs for more than 45 years and is regarded as the country’s lead bank for SMEs.

Target grants $25,000 to Hands On Manila

AMERICAN RETAIL STORE COMPANY Target Corp recently awarded Hands On Manila Foundation, through its Target International Grant Program, a $25,000 grant for the Hands On Schools-Galing Mo Kid (HOS-GMK) project. Hands On Manila was chosen because it is helping create positive, welcoming, learning environments that help young people become knowledgeable, productive citizens of the global community.

“This is the biggest single grant we have given to a foundation in the Philippines,” Target Sourcing Services/AMC vice president Nandie Aguilar said during the turnover rites at Pembo Elementary School in Makati.

“We chose the project which has a lot of focus on people who has the most promise to be able to make a difference within the organization and, in this case, focusing on the future leaders of our country,” Aguilar added. Aguilar was referring to the HOS-GMK mentoring program that aims to develop high-achieving public school students.

Aguilar and Target Sourcing Services/AMC Manila managing director Roger Ting, along with TSS/AMC Manila employees, went to meet the 30 recipients of the HOS-GMK program from Nueve de Febrero, Pembo and Plainview elementary schools. It was also a volunteer activity for the Target volunteers.

“Target puts a premium on volunteerism and this partnership will also give us opportunity to make a real difference in various communities,” Aguilar remarked.

Hands On Manila vice president Wynn Wynn Ong was grateful for the support given by Target. “When we started with HOS-GMK, I thought this is a good project because we are bringing together the educators, the children and the volunteers. Now, we are getting support from corporations and we are thankful because we feel more and more people believe in our program,” Ong said.

Target operates more than 1,500 general merchandise discount stores throughout the United States, and maintains an important global presence through its worldwide offices.

REAL ESTATE GIANTS, LUMINARIES RECOGNIZED IN BREW AWARDS

Recognized leaders in Philippine real estate recently gathered during the BizNewsAsia Real Estate Who's Who (BREW) Awards at the Hotel Intercon in Makati with President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo presenting the awards assisted by Antonio Lopez, BizNewsAsia publisher. The BREW awards are in recognition of the 'vision, innovative work and achievements' of the honorees in real estate and its ancillary industries. Right photo shows, from left, awardees R-II Builders chair Reghis Romero II, San Miguel Properties president Ramon Ang, Teresita Sy of SM Investments Corp; SM Prime Holdings chair Henry Sy Sr, and former Sen. Heherson Alvarez. Left photo shows John Gokongwei Jr, Robinsons Land chair, awarded by President Arroyo as Lopez looks on. Among other BREW private sector awardees were Megaworld Corp president Andrew Tan, Federal Land president Alfred Ty, Ayala Land chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala; Ayala Land vice chair Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala; Senate President Manuel Villar as president of Vista Land; Robinsons Land President Frederick Go; Moldex Realty president Jacinto Tan Uy, Creba Land Inc founding chair lawyer Manuel Serrano, Mindoro 1st District Rep. Rodolfo Valencia as president of Tagaytay Properties, VazBuilt CEO Edgardo Vasquez, Central Country Estate president Nestor Mangio, Filinvest Land president Andrew Gotianun Sr; Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando of BF Metal Corp, Palafox and Associates president Felino Palafox Jr. and managing partner Francisco Manosa, and Rosemarie Basa of the Philippine Real Estate Festival.

METROBANK FOUNDATION BAGS PHILIPPINE QUILL AWARDS

The Metrobank Foundation Inc (MBFI) recently won two Awards of Excellence during the 2007 Philippine Quill Awards organized annually by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC/Philippines). The Foundation won for the speech of Metrobank Group chair Dr. George SK Ty titled 'Building a Business of Trust' delivered during the Management Association of the Philippines awards (writing category), and for the 2007 Metrobank Art and Design Excellence (MADE) 2007 awarding ceremonies and exhibit opening (special events category). Shown during the awards night are (from left): IABC president Roni Tapia-Merk, MBFI assistant program manager Fiona Ting, MBFI deputy executive director Nicanor Torres Jr, MBFI president Aniceto Sobrepeña, and IABC board member Bong Osorio.

INAHGEN 2008 AT SMX CONVENTION CENTER

Inahgen 2008, The Asean Farmers Congress, the largest and the most prestigious agribusiness exhibition, will be staged from Feb. 27 to 29 at the SMX Convention Center, Halls 1 to 4, SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City. Shown is the contract signing of Gold and Silver Sponsors as witnessed by the leaders from the livestock and poultry industry. Seated, from left, are Albert RT Lim Jr, president, NFHFI, Learny Tanada, finance committee of Inahgen, Jimmy Chua of Infarmco Group of Companies (Gold Sponsor), also the Congress co-chair, Danny Sanchez, Inahgen Congress chair, and the president of Agriman Enterprises (Silver Sponsor), Geogie San Diego, president of Ubra and Egg Board. Standing, 1st row, from left: Rolando Ricasata and Reena Del Mundo of San Miguel Health Care (Gold Sponsor), Mildred Esquillo, vice president of Dataserve Management, event manager, Jayjay Gallardo of Agrimate (Silver Sponsor), Joyce Jane Sevilla of Cargill (Gold Sponsor), Dr. Tom Gurubat of Merial (Silver Sponsor, Dr. Vic Atienza, assistant director of BAI, Mayette Ramos, president of Dataserve Management, Dr. Abet Villacorte of ACES (Silver Sponsor), standing third row from left: Ronald Vergel De Dios of Pfizer Animal Health (Gold Sponsor) Francisco Buencamino, president of Pampi, Ely Yu, treasurer of NFHFI, Dr. Gilbert Cervantes of Hypig Genetics Inc (Gold Sponsor), Dr. Art Roxas of Ariela Marketing (Gold Sponsor), and Tobias Boldt of Bayer Animal Health Care (Silver Sponsor). The Congress will focus on animal health, genetics and nutrition. There will be technical seminars, live animal display, and boar auction during the 3-day event. Registration is free. Register online at www.inahgen.com

The First OPM Song Hits Awards tonight

THE FIRST AND MOST PRESTIGIOUS Filipino music awards awaits the country’s top performing artists as they vie for the First OPM Song Hits Awards organized by the leading music magazine authority in the industry, Top 40, Banda, Most Requested Songs, Most Wanted Song Hits, Pinoy & Classics.

Over 14 categories shall be awarded featuring the best performance by female and male recording artists, group/band artists, best performance by a duet, new artists/group/best male and female vocalists, album of the year, song of the year, best tribute/compilation album, best song written for a movie/TV/stage play, and best music video.

In addition to these categories, six Song Hits Brand Awards will also be given to artists in recognition of their contribution to the music industry while promoting Filipino talents as world-class artists.

The selection of winners of the various awards was based primarily on record sales combined with SMS voting and editors’ vote.

The First OPM Song Hits Awards night is scheduled Dec. 5 at the Cinema 5 of Robinsons Movie World, Robinsons Galleria, Edsa. This event is presented by Pepsi and brought to you by Sogo Hotel, Extract by Splash, Robinsons Movie World and Max 103.5FM. Media partners are Libre ("The Best Things in life are Libre"), Bandera, Tumbok and Cebu Daily News and Buy & Sell Ads Paper. Mobile content provided by MRM Studios. The event is invitational only.

Top 40, Banda, Most Requested Songs, Most Wanted Song Hits, Pinoy & Classics are published monthly by the Interview Magazine Inc, a subsidiary of the Buy and Sell Group of Publications.

Club Manila East’s Christmas event Dec. 9

ON DECEMBER 9, COME TO CLUB MANILA EAST Taytay as it celebrates Christmas and gives thanks to beloved friends and valued customers for the continuous patronage and support throughout the bountiful year that has passed. Kids 12 years and below who come in superhero, cartoon characters, fairies, and other creature costumes get free entrance. Party starts at 9 a.m. There will be games and prizes galore for everyone! Special prizes will be given to unique costumes and early birds! This event is sponsored by Alaska, Jollibee Taytay Uptown, Red Ribbon Bakeshop, and Shakey’s Pizza.

"Our Dearly Beloved Nanay"

BELEN E. SACDALAN

February 15, 1921 – November 24, 2007

Peacefully joined our Lord and her husband Nicanor, Sr. on November 24, 2007 at Los Angeles, U.S.A. at the age of 86.

Her children **Teresita** (†) and **Jose Syyap** (†), **Carmelita** and **Ben Dayco** (†), **Fernando** (†), **Nicanor, Jr.** and **Lily**, **Rebecca Dizon**, and **Ruth** and **Erning**; sister **Elizabeth**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Loyola Memorial Park - Marikina, Chapel 2.

Interment will be on Friday, December 7, 2007 at the Loyola Memorial Park - Marikina at 2:00 p.m.

More Obituary Ads on Page B6

In Loving Memory of Our Beloved

Maria Luz "Bayang" Fabian vda. de Fernandez

of Tarlac City

(15 August 1917 - 06 December 2003)

On the occasion of her
4th Death Anniversary
We would like to request relatives, friends & readers to remember her in your prayer.

Death Notice

ISABEL ESPIRITU VALENZUELA
Aug. 4, 1916 - Dec. 3, 2007

Her body lies at Loreto Church, Bustillos, Sampaloc, Manila.

Interment will be on Dec. 8, 8 a.m. at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

CLASSIFIEDS

Repeblika ng Pilipinas
Republic of the Philippines
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE I

Telefax: 636-6543
Direct Line: 633-9343
Trunk Line: 632-13-61 locals 2094
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DepED-Bids and Awards Committee I (BAC I) invites eligible bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for supply and delivery of the following:

Package	Items/Descriptions	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Pre-Bid Conference	Venue	Bid Submission Deadline/ Opening of Bids	End user
1	Ferrous Sulfate (200mg.) 5,000,000 (tablets)	Php 5,000,000.00	December 6, 2007, 3:00 P.M.	LCC Conference Room, 4th Flr., Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City	On or before December 20, 2007, 10:00 A.M.	Health and Nutrition Center (HNC)
2	Dental Anesthetics 125,000 carpules 2,500 Boxes	Php 1,875,000.00				
3	Disposable Dental Needles 125,000 pcs. minimum 2,500 boxes	Php 1,375,000.00				
4	Otoscopes 500 set	Php 1,000,000.00				
5	Citronella Shampoo 150,000 sachet	Php 900,000.00				
	Total	Php 10,150,000.00				

Bids received that exceed the ABC per Package shall be rejected. A bidder may bid for one or more Packages. Awarding shall be on a per Package basis. A bidder may submit bids before December 20, 2007 during office hours to the BAC I Chairperson through the BAC I Secretariat at the address indicated in the next paragraph.

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC I Secretariat, Procurement Service, Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City, starting on **December 4, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Php2,000.00** in cash to the DepED Cashier.

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures under R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Information is also available at **http://www.deped.gov.ph** or **www.procurementservice.org** or call DepED-PS at telephone no. 636-65-43 or fax no. 636-65-42.

DepED-BAC I reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to annul the bidding process, or declare failure of bidding at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected parties.

(Sgd.) **TEODOSIO C. SANGIL, JR.**
Undersecretary and BAC I Chairperson

(PDI–Dec. 5, 2007)

More Classified Ads
DOLE-NCR A8
DOLE-Region IV A18

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Makati City

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Petitioner,
-versus-
AIRKING RECORD CENTER and EDITHA MANACAP, Proprietress,
Respondent.
x---x

SSC CASE NO. 1-17627-07

SUMMONS

TO : MADAM EDITHA MANACAP
GREETINGS:

You are hereby required to file within fifteen (15) days from the date of announcement of this Summons with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission, 12th Floor, SSS (Makati) Building, 6782 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, your Answer to the petition filed by the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM, for remittance of unpaid SS contributions and penalties thereon for late payment.

You are further required to serve a copy of your Answer upon the petitioner thru its counsel, Atty. Ma. Flordeliza R. Torno of the Cluster legal Unit-NCR North, 11th Floor, SSS Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

If you fail to answer within the time prescribed above, the Hearing Commissioner, may upon motion of the petitioner or motu-proprio, declare you in default and shall forthwith proceed to receive the petitioner's evidence ex-parte and thereafter recommend to the Commission either the granting or denial of the petition as the evidence may warrant.

SO ORDERED.
Makati City, Philippines, November 5, 2007.

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI - Dec. 5, 2007)

The Dominican Province of the Philippines,
Priory of St. Thomas Aquinas,
University of Santo Tomas
and the bereaved family

request the faithful to pray
for the eternal repose of

FRAY DOMINGO T. BRASIL, O.P.

(1918-2007)

His remains lie in state at the UST Chapel.

Funeral Mass will be on December 5, 2007 at 2:00 p.m., UST Chapel.

Interment will immediately follow at the Sanctuario de Santo Cristo Cemetery, San Juan, Metro Manila.

> ***"I am the Resurrection and the Life, whoever believes in Me will live, even though he dies: and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die."***
>
> *John 11:25-26*

MIGUEL BORJA SANTOS

"IGUE"

Widower of the late
Victoria Dayrit Santos
Peacefully joined his Creator
on
December 2, 2007 at the age of 88.

His bereaved children **Charito & Jojo Gavino, Manny, Tessie & Ding Castor, Alice Bernardo, Ike (†), Lulu & Butch Flores**, Grandchildren, great-grandchildren, together with his sisters **Corazon, Lourdes, Herminia**, and **Angelina** request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Our Lady of Grace Columbary & Mortuary Haven, 11th Ave., cor. 2nd St., Grace Park Caloocan City, Benjamin de Jesus Chapel.

Interment will be on Thursday, December 6, 2007 after the 2:00 P.M. Mass at Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

CARMEN FABELLA BATE

who joined her Creator on November 15, 2007

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude
and sincerest appreciation to all those
who offered prayers and
in countless other ways, condoled and comforted
us in our hour of bereavement.

Be on Top of a friendly World.

Come to our Open House on Dec. 5 (Wed.) and Dec. 7 (Fri.), 9 am to 10 pm,
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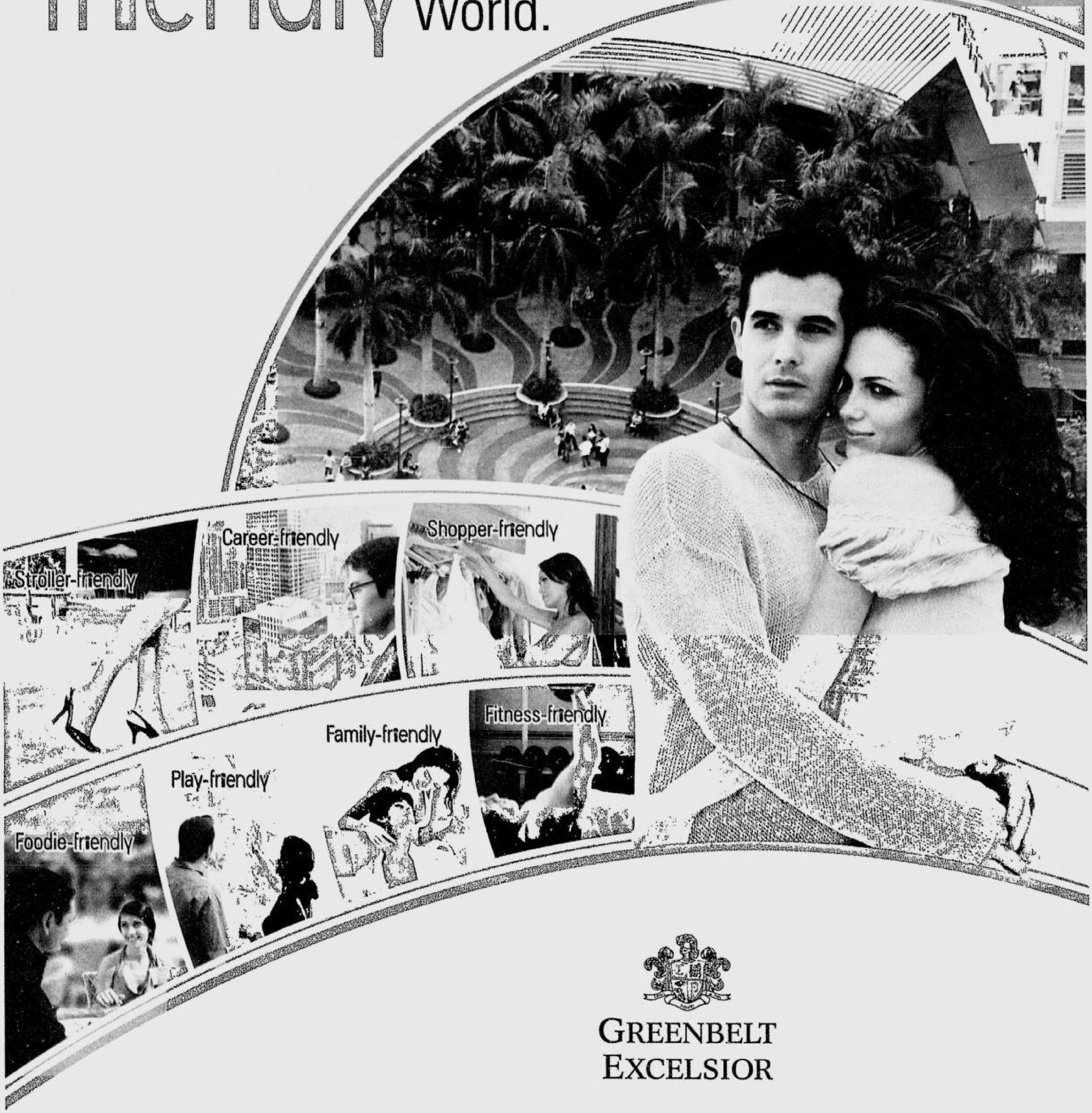
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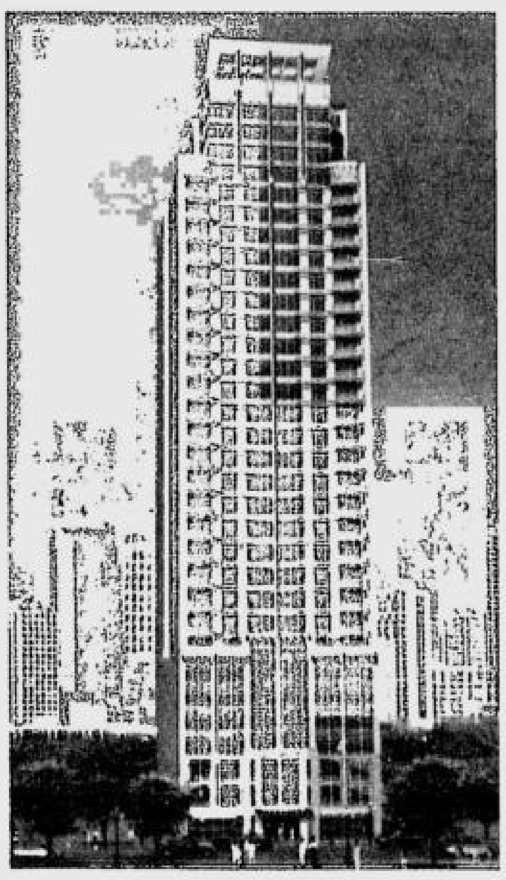

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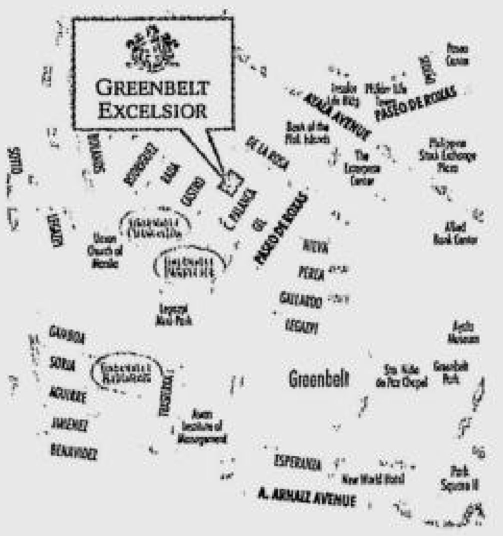
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Sleep deprivation impairs driver judgment, experts say

By Tessa R. Salazar

SLEEP DEPRIVATION CAN have a number of adverse effects. It can take its toll on productivity, mood, concentration and judgment.

And when a sleep-deprived driver is behind the wheels of a moving vehicle weighing tons, a disaster is just waiting to happen.

Dr. Edgardo Juan L. Tolentino, president of Group for Addiction Psychiatry of the Philippines, told the INQUIRER that society should take a closer look at sleep-deprived drivers.

"We may need to zero in on truck drivers as a unique group. Because of our traffic regulations, they usually ply the roads at night. This makes them highly likely to be sleep-deprived," Tolentino said.

He added that psychostimulants could be taken by these drivers to keep them awake and alert. These could be substances "as simple as coffee or cigarettes, but they could also involve possibly illegal medications."

Unhealthy

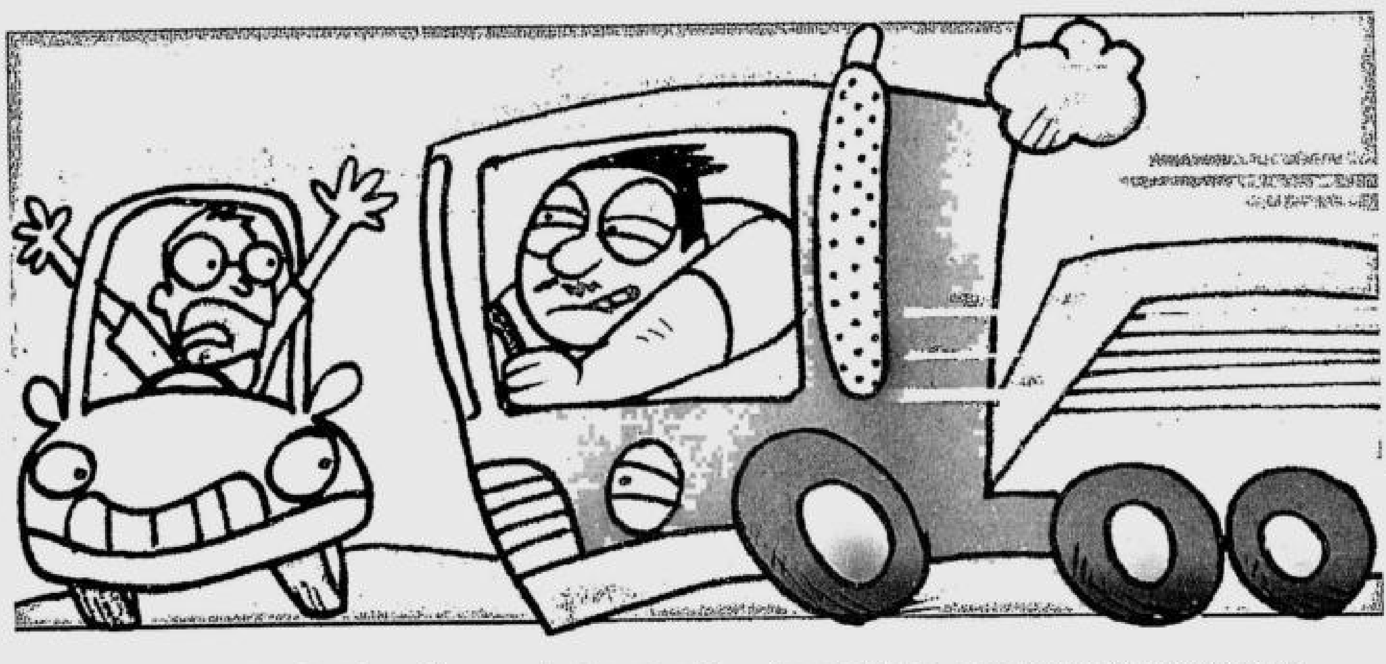
Tolentino surmised that a typical driver's lifestyle, including diet, would be unhealthy. This could lead to such sleep disorders as apnea. With sleep apnea, "oxygen doesn't reach the brain in sufficient quantities."

Imbibing alcoholic beverages to stave off sleepiness is also a mistake. "A lot of them think alcohol is a psychostimulant when, in fact, it's a depressant," he said.

Tolentino stressed that a person who doesn't sleep well doesn't think well, and will not be in the proper state of mind or mood. He will also not react properly because his cognition would most likely be impaired. And at a time when the stress level rises—during confrontation, or frustrations—the threshold (for restraint) lowers.

Tolentino said critical institutions such as hospitals have enforced proper rest periods for their professional staff. Makati Medical Center , for instance, no longer allows emergency doctors on 24-hour shifts, because sleep deprivation could affect their judgment and mood.

Tests



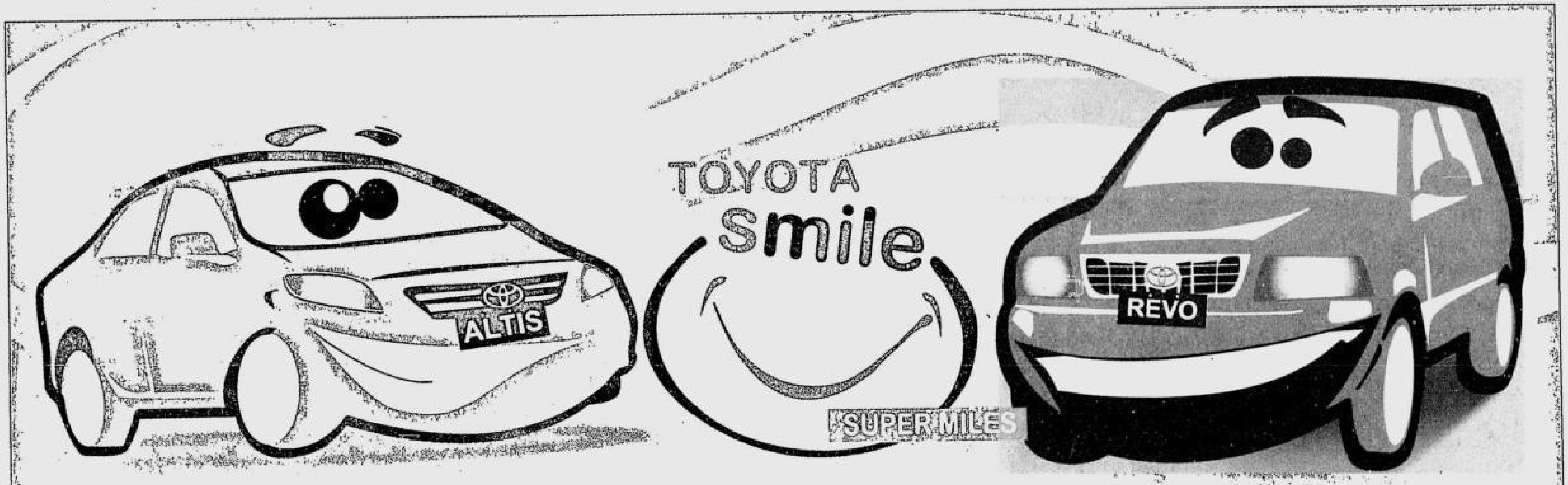
Tolentino stressed that LTO drug tests (for license renewals or applications) have become insufficient. The test which would really be of use, he said, would be an alcohol and drug test on drivers immediately after the traffic violation or accident. He said alcohol, rather than drugs, was a more common cause of accidents.

Mandy Eduque, Automobile Association Philippines director, remarked: "They don't even make offenders do the (simple drunk driving test) of making them walk in a straight line, touch the tip of their noses. There should be a standard test to determine whether a person is driving under the influence."

"If I take shabu (methamphetamine), within two days, the substance is flushed out of my system and will not be detected by a drug test. We know that the renewal of licenses happens on one's birthday so offenders can predict when they would have to stop taking the drug temporarily," Tolentino said.

He added, "The LTO data indicate that between 1 and 5 percent test positive for drugs. The yield is too low to justify continuing such a practice."

Dr. Felicitas Soriano, president of Philippine Psychiatry Association, said psychological tests should also be added in drivers' license applications and renewals.



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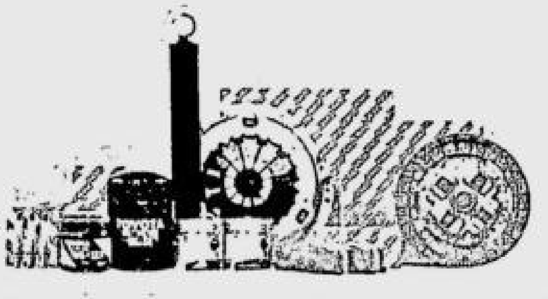

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3 Replacement of Front Brake Pads (LH & RH)	For as low as P3,500.00***	SAVE as much as P733.00	P3,900.00***	SAVE P689.00	FREE tightening of body bolts & 10-pt check-up
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5 Replacement of Clutch Disc, Clutch Cover, Release Bearing, Pilot Bearing**, Rear Crankshaft Oil Seal	P10,733.00***	SAVE P1,894.00	For as low as P10,329.00***	SAVE as much as P2,654.00	FREE tightening of body bolts & 10-pt check-up
6 Replacement of Upper and Lower Radiator Hose and Super Long Life Coolant	P1,393.00	SAVE P448.00	For as low as P1,156.00	SAVE as much as P499.00	FREE labor on coolant replacement & 10-pt check-up
7 Replacement of Timing Belt, Idler Bearing 1 & 2 , Front Crankshaft Oil Seal and Front Camshaft Oil Seal (For Revo w/ 2L engine only)	N/A	N/A	P10,271.00	SAVE P1,813.00	FREE tightening of body bolts and 10-pt check-up

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- * *Not applicable if refacing of rotor disc or flywheel is necessary*
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Promo period is from October 15, 2007 to January 15, 2008.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4650 Series of 2007

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TOYOTA moving forward

Chevy's compact crossover

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

ALTHOUGH IT DID NOT WIN in the Petron 2007 Car of the Year Philippines Awards, the Chevrolet Captiva is a winner in what matters most to the automotive industry: global sales. The Bangkok Post reported last month that strong worldwide demand for the Captiva has prompted General Motors to shift part of its production from the GM Daewoo plant in South Korea to GM's Rayong plant in Thailand, which began making Captivas in August for export to Australia and New Zealand.

The Captiva debuted at the 2006 Geneva Motor Show as a product of GM's South Korean arm, GM Daewoo Auto & Technology (GMDAT). After launching the Captiva in its home country in March 2006, GMDAT began exporting it to Europe in the summer. Last August, GM Philippines unveiled the Captiva at the First Philippine International Motor Show.

2 choices

The thing about the Captiva that immediately caught my attention was that, like its Korean-based rivals, it offers two choices: 1) either a gasoline engine or a common rail direct injection (CRDi) diesel engine; and, 2) 4x2/ front wheel drive (FWD) or 4x4/ all-wheel-drive (AWD).

The P1,199,000 FWD and the P1,399,000 AWD gasoline variants are powered by a 2.4-liter DOHC 16-valve 4-in-line engine that originated from Holden in Australia and produces 142 PS/5,200 rpm and max torque of 220 Nm/4,000 rpm. GM claims that the gas Captiva averages 10.08 kilometers per liter mileage in combined city and highway driving.

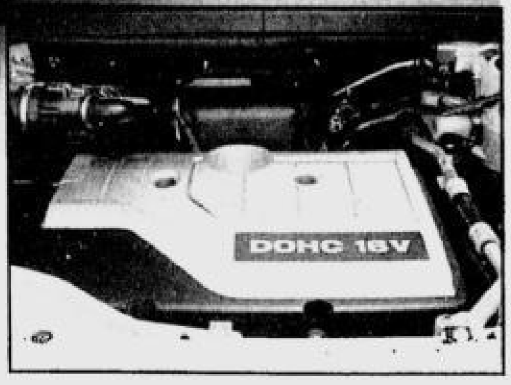
The diesel variant, offered with either FWD (P1,299,000) or AWD (P1,499,000), has a 2.0-liter SOHC 16-valve CRDi engine packing 150 PS/4,000 rpm and 310 Nm/2,000 rpm max torque with a variable geometry turbocharger for smooth turbo intervention from low rev levels. Manufacturer-claimed average fuel consumption in combined city and highway driving is 13.13 km/liter.

New series

The Captiva's CRDi engine, with aluminum cylinder heads and a state-of-the-art injection system, is the first of a new series of diesel engines developed jointly by GM Powertrain and GMDAT with the Italian firm VM Motori. Both the gas and diesel versions have an electronically controlled 5-speed automatic transmission with a Tiptronic clutchless manual option.

I was given the chance to test-drive for one week each the gas AWD and CRDi AWD variants of the Captiva and found them both pleasant, efficient and unexciting. Which is to be expected since the Captiva does not pretend to be a high-performance crossover or an invincible off-roader SUV with heavy low-range transfer gearing.

GASOLINE or diesel? This one is the gasoline-fueled Captiva.



THE 2.4-LITER, 4-cyl., DOHC engine of the Captiva

IN THE COCKPIT, a multifunction steering wheel, 5-speed AT and 6-in-dash CD/MP3 player

AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA

Family wagon

The Captiva is more of a solidly built, well-equipped, high-riding and exceptionally roomy family wagon. It shares the same Theta platform as GM's American compact SUVs, the Chevrolet Equinox and Saturn Vue. The Captiva's cabin is spacious enough to seat seven, but unlike in Europe, it is sold here only as a five-seater. The five-seater Captiva has enormous cargo room in the back, increasing to 930 liters when the second row of seats is folded flat into the floor. A large compartment under the cargo floor offers safe storage for valuable items.

Externally, the Captiva somewhat resembles the Honda CR-V with its projector-type headlights, sculptured hood, arching roof and curvy window line. The integrated skid panels in front and the twin exhaust tailpipes at the back contribute to the sporty styling. Inside, a pleasant environment awaits with ample headroom for everyone, user-friendly, well-laid-out instruments and supportive seats. The center console with aluminum trim houses a 6-in-dash CD/MP3 radio player and the climate controls.

On the road, the Captiva makes relaxed progress with good road manners and little noise intruding into the cabin. The steering is light and the fully independent suspension ensures riding comfort. Although the Captiva is not designed for high speed, both the gas and CRDi variants are capable of maintaining 160 km per hour (kph) on the open Skyway, with the CRDi version accelerating further to 180.

Standard equipment

The Captiva comes with standard equipment that is usually found only in more expensive vehicles such as twilight sentinel (automatic lamp control), rain-sensing wipers, reverse parking sensor, integrated rear spoiler, headlamp leveling device, gas type hood lifter and smart rear wiper.

When driving conditions get slippery or rough, the rear axle of the AWD Captiva is instantly selected to give optimum traction through all four wheels. However, the Captiva sold here does not have GM's Electronic Stability Program (ESP) to interact with the on-demand AWD system and ABS to enhance driver control when wheel spin is imminent. And there are only two airbags whereas in Europe the Captiva has four.

Nonetheless, the Captiva gives great value for its price and offers consumers a wider range of choices in the compact crossover market.

* * *

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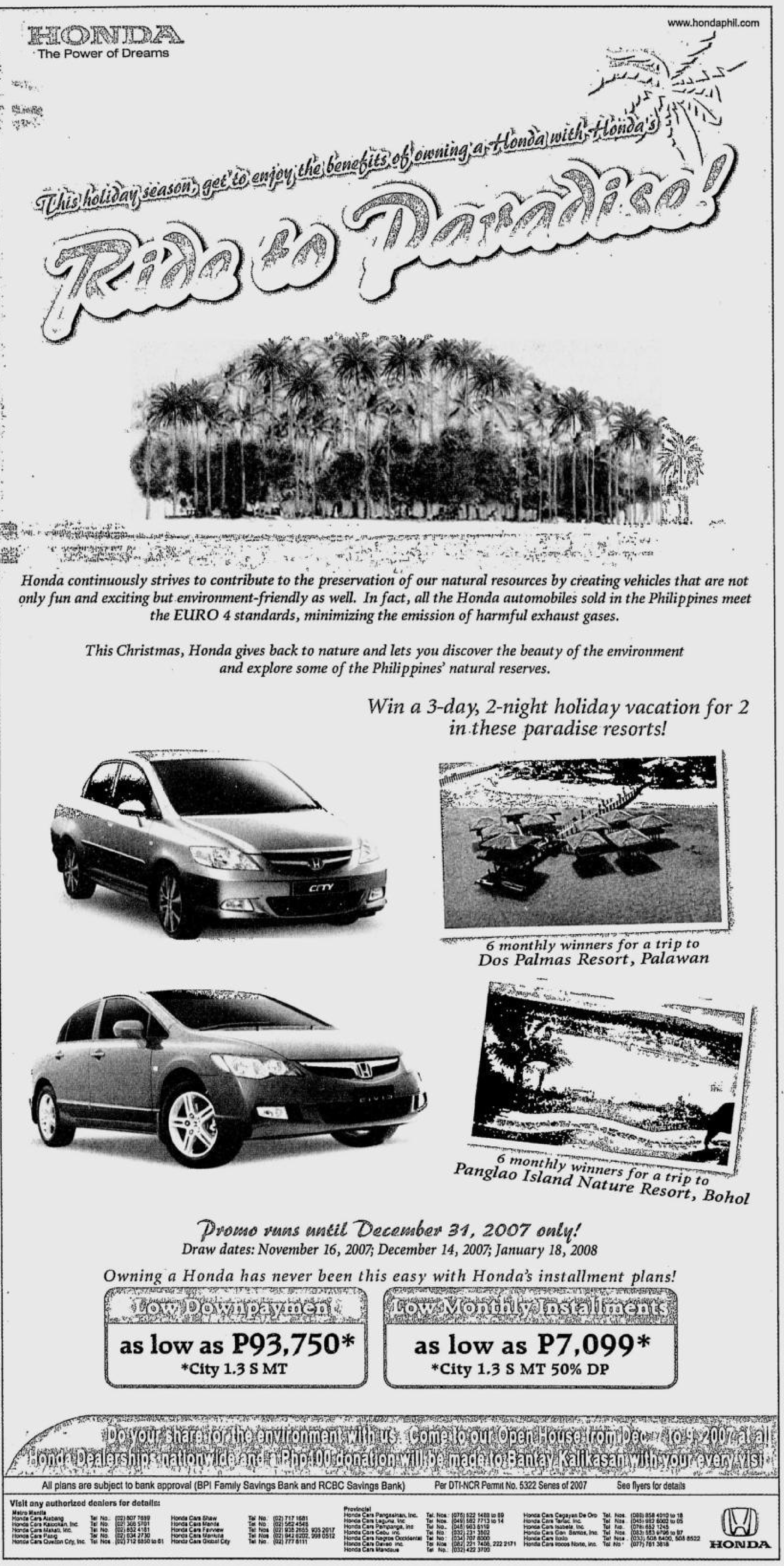

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HONDA

TRANSPORT TRIVIA

By Emman Cena

THIS 1979 Porsche 928, the car that Tom Cruise drove in the movie 'Risky Business,' is among the crowd drawers at the Forney Transportation Museum.

'Anything on Wheels'

WANT TO FEAST YOUR eyes on the rarest and the most beautiful cars ever created? Then walk your way into the Forney Transportation Museum and have a glimpse of the fab finds in automotive industry's history—railcars, cabooses, coaches, Forney locomotive, trolleys and much more.

The Forney Transportation Museum in Denver, Colorado, is a one-of-a-kind collection of over 500 exhibits relating to historical transportation. Records show that the museum, which carries the slogan "Anything on Wheels," began with antique cars, but soon expanded to include vehicles of all kinds and sizes, making it one of the finest collections in the United States.

The 70,000 square feet facility, which is named after its founder J.D. Forney, houses one of the few remaining units of the world's largest steam locomotive, the Big Boy, which measures over 134 feet long.

Most of the collection's vehicles are recognizable from years past, but some were never put into production. A few of the exhibit's top-draws are the antique automobiles from 1899 to 1976 including motorcycles, farm machinery, a giant model train setup, Amelia Earhart's "Gold bug" Kissel Car and Prince Aly Kahn's Rolls Royce.

The hundreds of early 20th-century automobiles from all over the world are also displayed and protected at the facility.

J.D. Forney, the founder of the renowned Forney Industries involved in electrical and welding supplies, began his interest in collecting antique and classic cars after his wife and children gave him a 1921 Kissel yellow Tourister. Soon he started taking in old cars and carriages as trades on his welding products.

Soon, the facility is set to open another 70,000 square feet of space to house more collections.

Reference: http://forney-museum.org

The Best Cars of 2007

(First of a series)

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

THE MOTORING YEAR IS about to end. As with every 12 months of reviewing automotive products in the local market, there are some that truly stand out. It is typical though that in a year marked with multiple releases only a few cars can be labeled as decent, fewer still those that make the grade as exceptional driving tools. So without further ado, here are my personal choices for the automotive stars of 2007.

Let us begin with people movers and utility vehicles, traditionally two of the least sexy niches in the market. Thankfully the once blasé and basic have given way to vehicles that are actually bold and beautiful.

One pricey MPV

In the people mover segment look no further than the Toyota Previa. Let me agree first with my colleagues in the motoring press that this is one pricey MPV. Even with the styling, the adequate engine and a driving characteristic that borders on fun, at over P2 million, it is easy to start questioning the value of such a product. One must consider the Previa's features list that includes goodies more associated with European luxury brands like premium HID lighting, interior finish, safety and driver access so that the retail price of this car will start making sense.

In the utility segment, pickup trucks in the market have the Mitsubishi Strada to contend with. While there might be quicker, stronger and more all-terrain-capable competitors to the Strada, two factors seal its place as a 2007 standout. First is that the overall package with Dakar rally raider looks and a 3.2-liter common-rail, direct-injection turbo that hurls this truck with conviction.

This truck's ride quality and road able suspension are its strengths. While still a tad bumpy, the Strada's behavior on pavement is generations away from anything else. Those seeking an off roader should really look elsewhere; this is a true street truck with the ability to drive well on tarmac and light gravel. Intercom system, 16-point roll cage and co-driver not included.

Drivability plum

One cannot talk of the local market without the compact SUV segment. The prime suspect of this behavior is our doe-eyed admiration of the American market. Colonial mentality is a hard habit to break. Sad that general drivability and fuel efficiency are rare in the segment.

The drivability plum in the SUV segment goes to the 2007 Subaru Forester. In turbo trim this compact SUV is the hands down leader in seat of the pants, backside to the bucket seats driving. All-wheel drive culled from the Impreza and a similar 2.5-liter turbo-powered engine make this compact SUV a fire-breathing family vehicle that eats twisty mountain roads for breakfast.

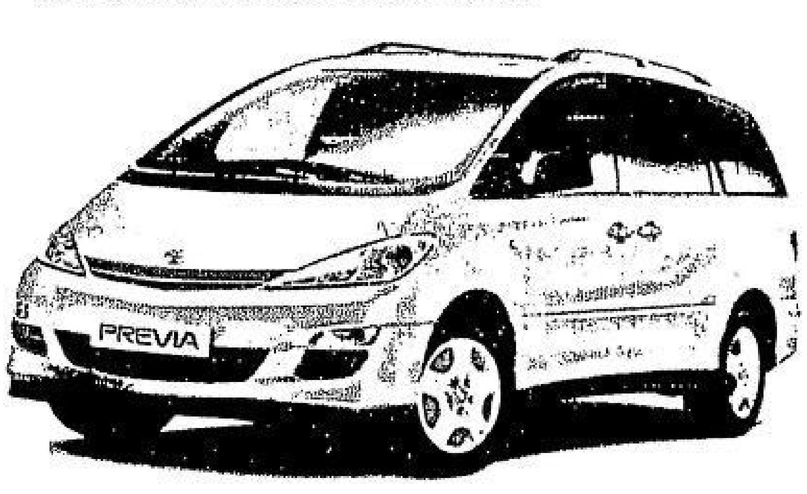
Fuel efficiency

While this is no pure-bred, rally replica, the genetic similarities with the Impreza are easy to recognize once behind the steering wheel. Mind the slightly softer suspension and the less aggressive braking ability and the Forester can be made to dance in almost any road condition. Please forget fuel efficiency though as performance logically comes with a price.

If some sort of fuel efficiency is your number one concern in the compact SUV segment, the 2007 Honda CRV 2.0-liter in six-speed manual is something you should look at. Glossing over the gaudy design, the basic interiors and the fact that every Filipino family will have one in a few years, it is the engine of the CRV that begs your attention.

Based on the efficient R18 engine of the current Civic, emissions and good mileage are surprising with the CRV. Just how frugal can a gasoline-powered SUV be? How does nine kilometers per liter in Manila traffic sound? Just mind the accelerator, keep the rpms down and use the factory-installed fuel-efficiency meter to its fullest.

Next week, the categories get sexier with automobiles that can really be called driving tools. The year that is about to end has gifted the Philippine market with cars that can really make the most of our not so open roads. While performance takes a top billing for next week, it is surprising that value for money is not something lost when looking for a car with a little ability. Care to guess the top three?



FRONT profile: larger and more prominent kidney grille above a redesigned front bumper and a new color-coded spoiler. It has new dual circular headlights.

MOTORSCOPE

Best media event award

TOYOTA MOTOR PHILIPPINES INTERNATIONAL INNOVATIVE Multipurpose Vehicle (IMV) Roadtrek bagged the best media event award in the recently concluded Car of the Year (Coty) awards organized by the members of the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi).

As part of its sustaining efforts to promote its International Innovative Multipurpose Vehicles (IMV), Toyota Motor Philippines in May 2007 held the Third Leg of the Toyota Roadtrek, an annual activity involving 10 teams from the national and local Visayas-Mindanao motoring media.

Through the IMV Roadtrek, the toughness and versatility of the IMVs—composed of the Innova MPV, Fortuner SUV and Hilux Pickup—were tested under various road conditions.

The participating media teams were brought to a cross-country experience involving physical challenges in the beautiful provinces of Dumaguete, Oriental Negros all the way to Cebu City in Central Visayas.

From May 31 to June 3, the Toyota IMVs took more than 40 media participants to famous destination spots were they had the kayak relay in the serene twin lakes of Balinsasayao, braved the 150-ft rappel and 30-ft jump in Niludhan Falls, and dived the world-famous marine sanctuaries in Apo Island.

Concept Car of the Year

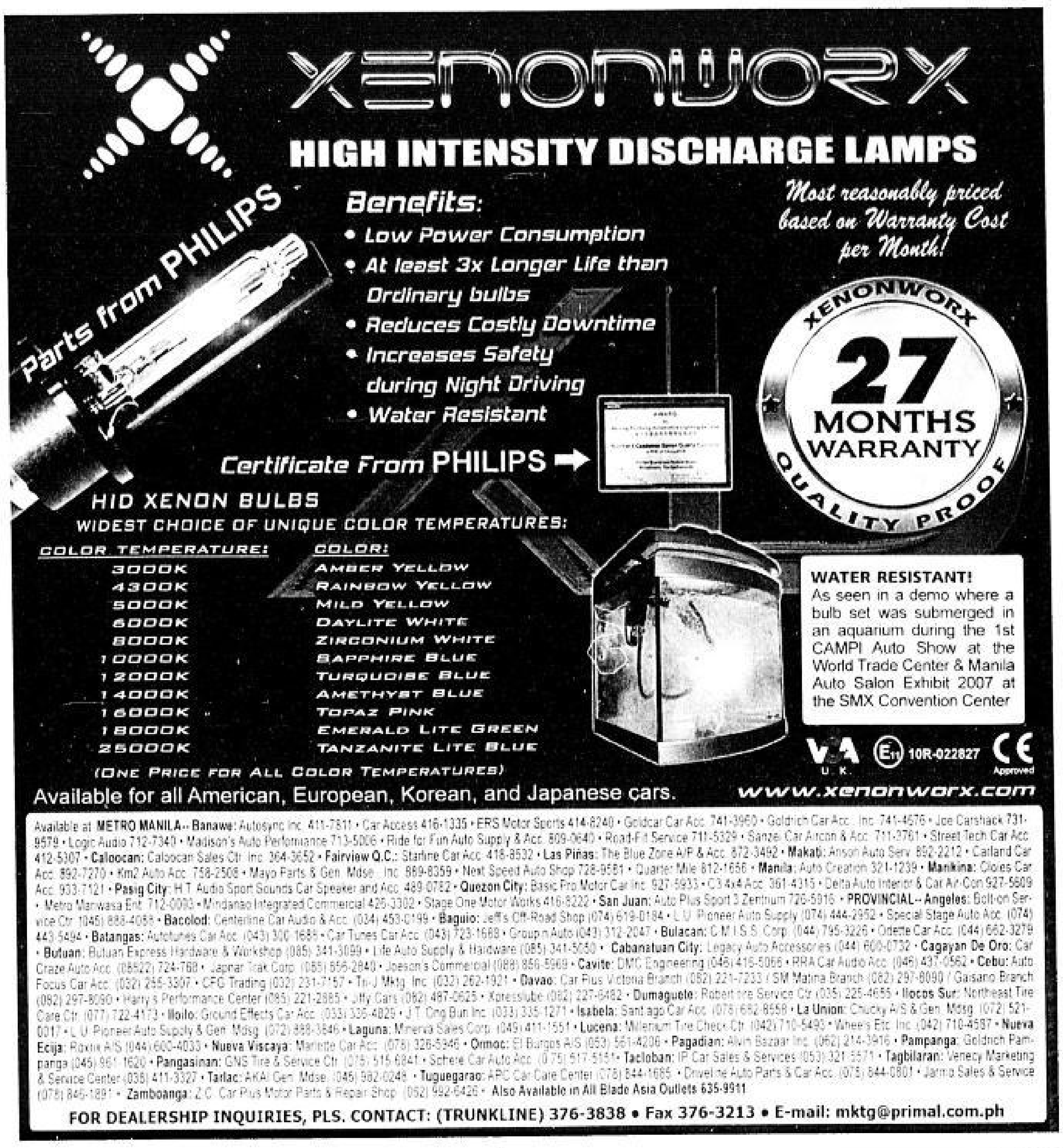
THE JAGUAR C-XF HAS BEEN NAMED "CONCEPT CAR OF THE Year" by leading Japanese design magazine Car Styling. Established 30 years ago, Car Styling is read all over the world and is the only design magazine published in both Japanese and English.

Jaguar's Design Director Ian Callum said: "It is a great honor for Jaguar to receive this award from such a reputable journal like Car Styling—a magazine that all designers have grown up with for the last 30 years. My colleague Julian Thomson and I both believe it has always demonstrated the very best in our profession, so it makes us particularly proud to receive this recognition for the C-XF."

Akira Fujimoto, editor in chief at Car Styling commented: "The C-XF was chosen for this award as it tries to achieve a sense of high quality by using new materials and new sensibilities, not only on the exterior but also in the interior. At Car Styling we can foresee this comprehensive, high level of styling will be fully reflected in the new generation of Jaguars."

Designed and built in the Midlands by the same teams that produced the award-winning Jaguar XK in 2006, the C-XF concept was a precursor to cars that will become recognized for their groundbreaking exterior looks and innovative interiors such as the new XF, revealed for the first time at Frankfurt Motor Show in September.

Available to order now, the XF will be in Jaguar Cars Inc. (897-8888) Manila showrooms by the first quarter of 2008, and will be offered in a variety of engine models: 3L gasoline, 4.2L V8, and 4.2L V8 supercharged.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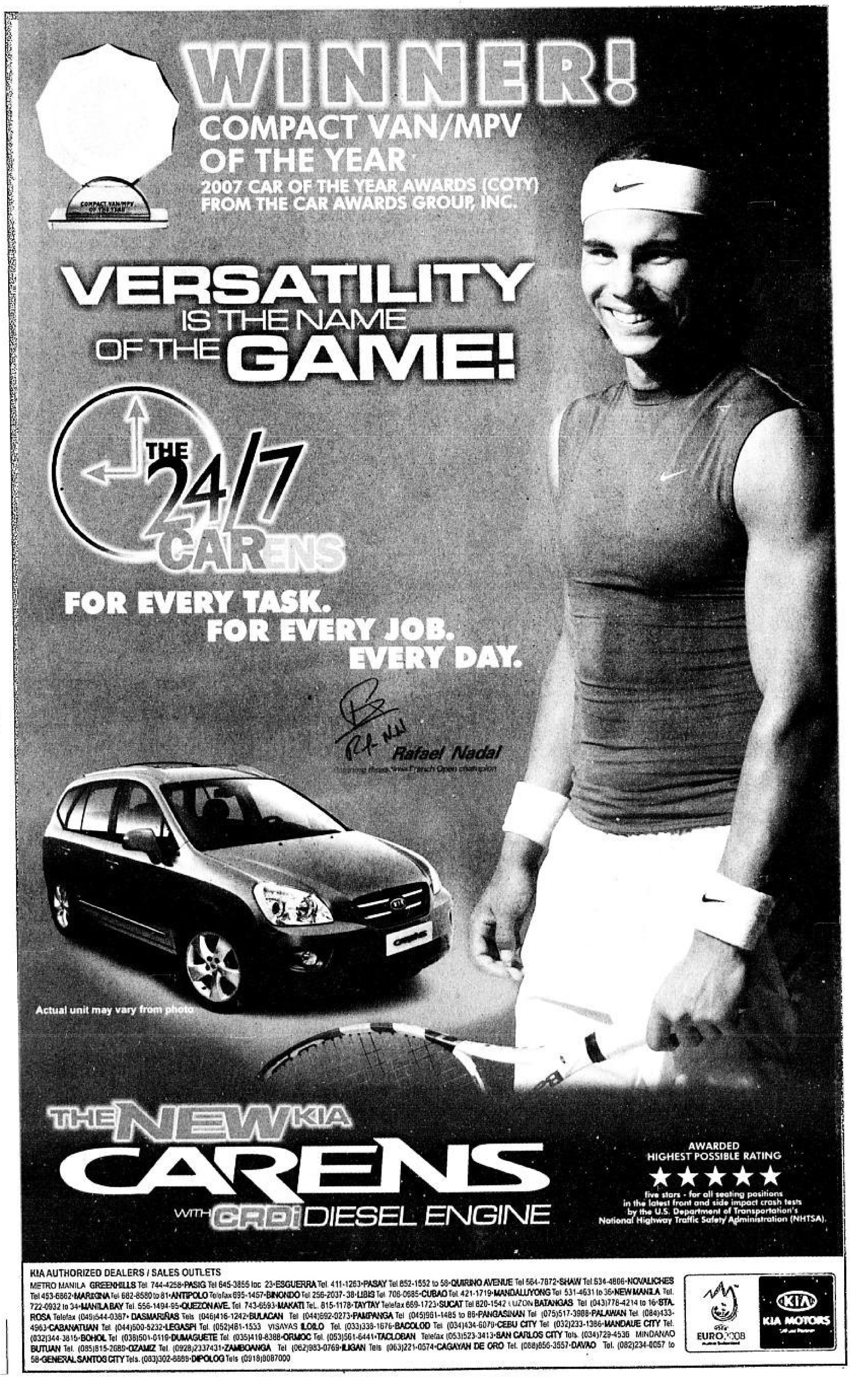
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EURO 2008
KIA MOTORS

Subaru's Impreza takes on a new game face

THE 2008 IMPREZA now sports a broader grille that sweeps into the headlights.

By Charles E. Buban

YOU BUY A SUBARU Impreza WRX not because you just want a sedan that you could use to hit the road in your own ride and on your own time.

You choose this particular brand of car because you want to experience how its symmetric all-wheel-drive, stiff suspension set-up and four-cylinder turbo boxer engine work in unison to give you that sure-footed feel and ready-for-the-rally driving attitude.

Despite this fact, some interested car buyers still find the Impreza too old-fashioned in terms of design and comfort features.

Last week, Motor Image Pilipinas Inc., the official distributor of the Subaru models in the Philippines, unveiled the new, third-generation Subaru Impreza WRX.

My, how the Subaru Impreza has evolved!

Redrawn, redeveloped

The only thing that is carried over from the previous generation is the name as the Impreza's body structure, interior and exterior design as well as its drivetrain are completely redrawn if not redeveloped.

The 2008 Impreza is now a five-door hatchback, sports a broader grille that sweeps into the headlights (dropped the separate center grille element of the previous generation), a wheelbase that is 9.8 centimeters longer than its predecessor, and a new, compact, double-wishbone rear suspension.

Even the 2.5 engine in the WRX, for example, now sports a new intake port design and is mounted much lower to improve the vehicle's center of gravity as well as handling and stability.

Evolution

"Indeed, the new Impreza is clearly an evolution of the outgoing model," said Ariel de Jesus, Mipi marketing manager .

The Impreza is available in three variants: 227 horsepower, 2.5-liter WRX (five-speed manual); 148 hp, 2-liter R-Sport (four-speed) automatic; and 148 hp, 2-liter R-Sports (five-speed) manual.

According to De Jesus, the 2008 Subaru was developed around the concept of refined design, resulting in a more compact and streamlined look on the whole. Despite this fact, the 2008 Subaru's spaciousness is never compromised. In fact, there is now an additional two inches of shoulder room in the front seats as well as wider luggage compartment.

THE 2008 IMPREZA

High grade

"Inside, high-grade materials and double-stitched fabrics are used. The windows now have door frames for improved body rigidity and quieter interior while the door panels now have molded storage areas to place drinks," De Jesus added.

Even the new Subaru's center console is updated—now sporting a minipin jack to connect to an iPod music player.

With these changes, the new Subaru is indeed headed on the right direction.

"With the new design and added technology, the new Impreza improves on the power and performance characteristics for which the lineup is known. We also priced our three variants competitively so Filipino car buyers will now have to think long and hard before buying their first or next car," De Jesus said.

The WRX 2.5 is priced at P1.750 million while the 2.0R-Sports automatic at P1.1140 million and 2.0R-Sports manual at P1.060 million.

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RUN YOUR OWN RACE

2bU! gift guide

DECEMBER HAS HIT US ONCE AGAIN —and people are already going mad ticking names off their long Christmas list. We totally understand. Shopping for loved ones can feel like a big chore during this traffic-plagued season. We have tons of gift suggestions and, no, we're not talking about mugs and scented candles. Think of this issue as our gift to you—our way of making your Christmas duties a little easier.

We asked some of your favorite teen magazines to spill their gift ideas, too.

And we're throwing in gift wrapping suggestions and party plans as well.

Ready, set, Christmas shop.

Meg's Yuletide picks

1) Peewee Reyes-Isidro, editor in chief, Meg: "Add some shimmer and sparkle to your outfit with a shiny neckpiece, and you'll surely stand out this holiday! Silver gemstone necklace from People are People (P399).

2) Maris A. Mortel, associate editor, Meg: "This roomy satchel makes a practical yet stylish gift for ladies (like me!) with the habit of carrying their lives wherever they go!" Sand-colored satchel by Le Donne (P1295).

3) Kim Reyes, beauty associate, Meg: "Girls love beauty and pampering stuff! Trying out the endless variety of prettily packaged products at the stores make shopping for them great fun, too." Black Label Eye Shadow in Bloom Pink and Sky Blue (P355 each), and Peach and Pineapple Yogurt Pack (P265 each) at The Face Shop.

4) Pipay Reyes, fashion assistant, Meg: "What woman wouldn't love a new pair of shoes? Wedges are sexy but are more comfortable than stilettos. Plus, there are many unique designs and colors to choose from!" Purple wedges by Matthews from CMG (P1999).

5) Michelle Ancheta, editorial assistant, Meg: "Make an early resolution to live life to the full. Say it loud and proud with a cool statement tee and set yourself for a great 2008!" Tee by Nike (P895).

The SSI Electronic Gift Card

introducing the color of the perfect gift of interesting possibilities

For more information, call 898-2042, 818-3937, 757-6282, 634-8019, or approach any of our store managers to inquire about the Purple Card.

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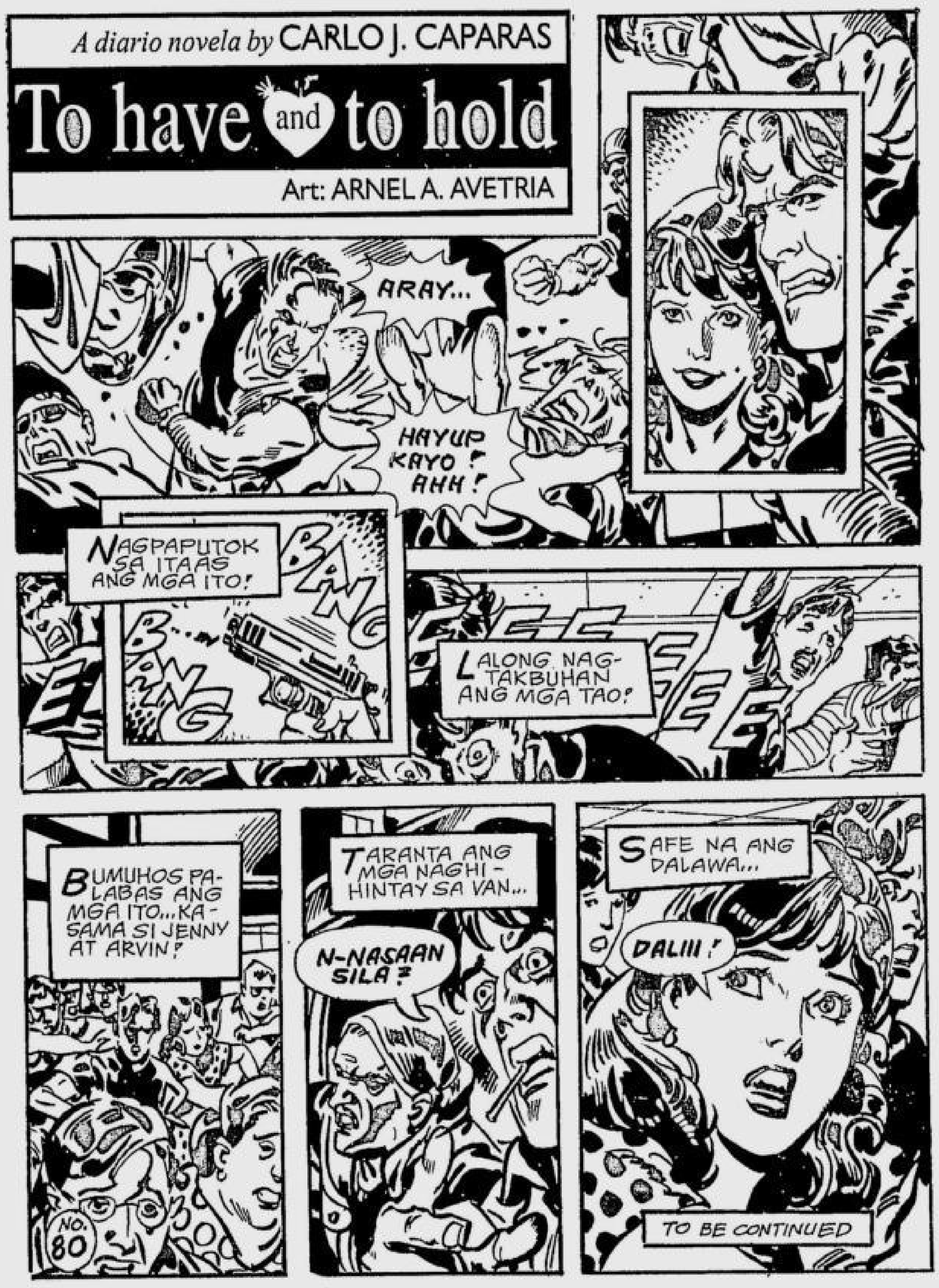
Stores Specialists, Inc.

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

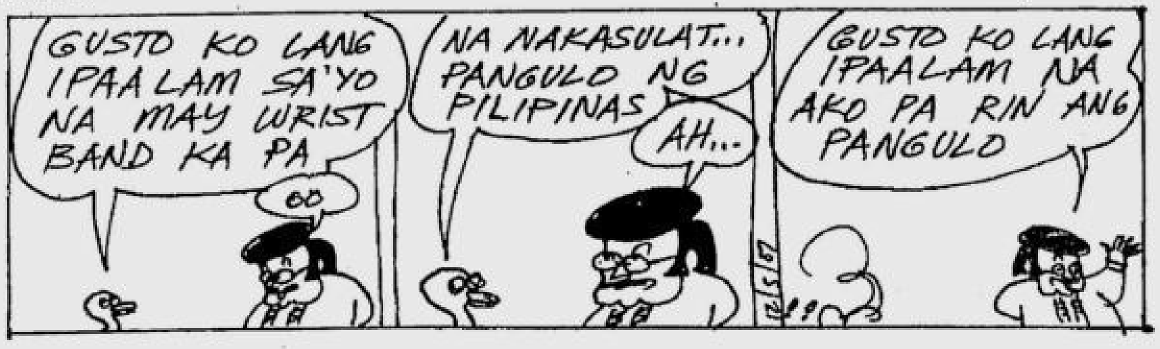
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


ARAY...
HAYUP KAYO! AHH!
NAGPAPUTOK SA ITAAS ANG MGA ITO!
BANG
B...BANG
LALONG NAGTAKBUHAN ANG MGA TAO!
EEEEE
BUMUHOS PALABAS ANG MGA ITO...KASAMA SI JENNY AT ARVIN!
TARANTA ANG MGA NAGHIHINTAY SA VAN...
N-NASAAN SILA?
SAFE NA ANG DALAWA...
DALIII!
NO. 80
TO BE CONTINUED

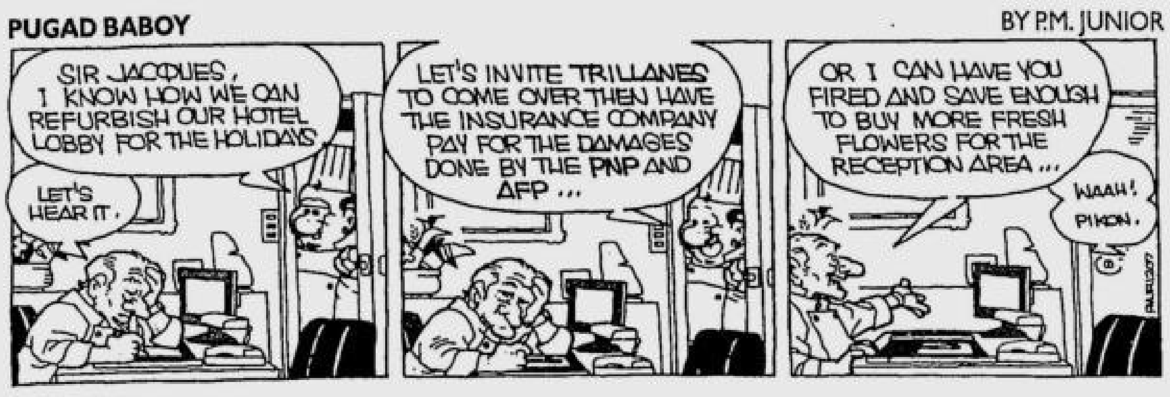
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GUSTO KO LANG IPAALAM SA'YO NA MAY WRIST BAND KA PA
OO
NA NAKASULAT... PANGULO NG PILIPINAS
AH...
GUSTO KO LANG IPAALAM NA AKO PA RIN ANG PANGULO

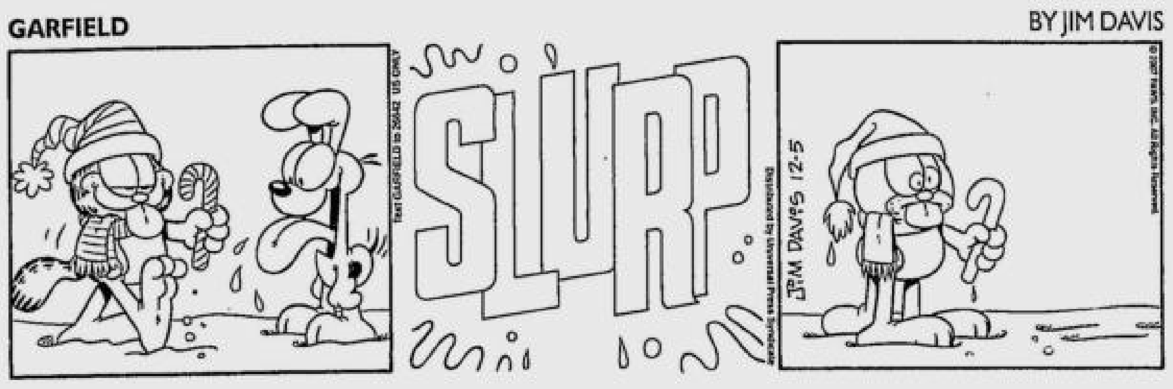
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SIR JACQUES, I KNOW HOW WE CAN REFURBISH OUR HOTEL LOBBY FOR THE HOLIDAYS
LET'S HEAR IT.
LET'S INVITE TRILLANES TO COME OVER THEN HAVE THE INSURANCE COMPANY PAY FOR THE DAMAGES DONE BY THE PNP AND AFP ...
OR I CAN HAVE YOU FIRED AND SAVE ENOUGH TO BUY MORE FRESH FLOWERS FOR THE RECEPTION AREA ...
WAAH! PIKON.

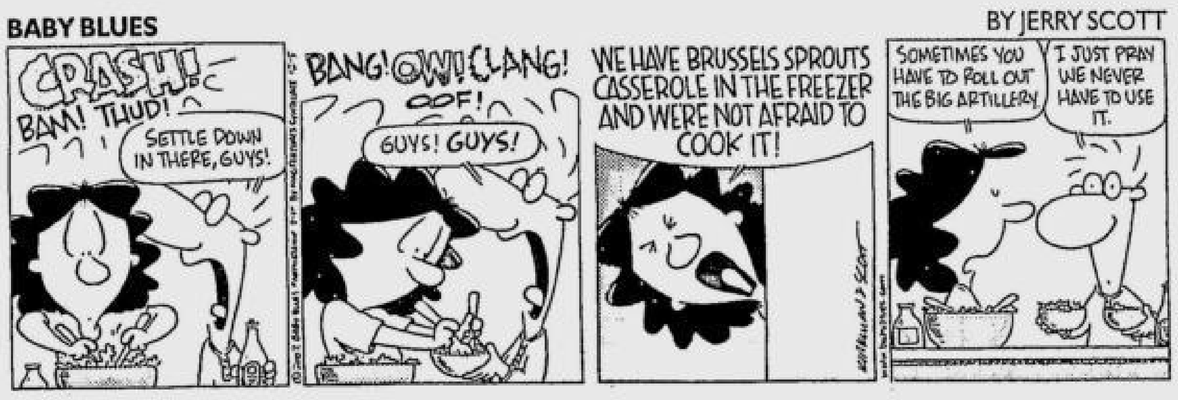
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


SLURP
JIM DAVIS 12-5

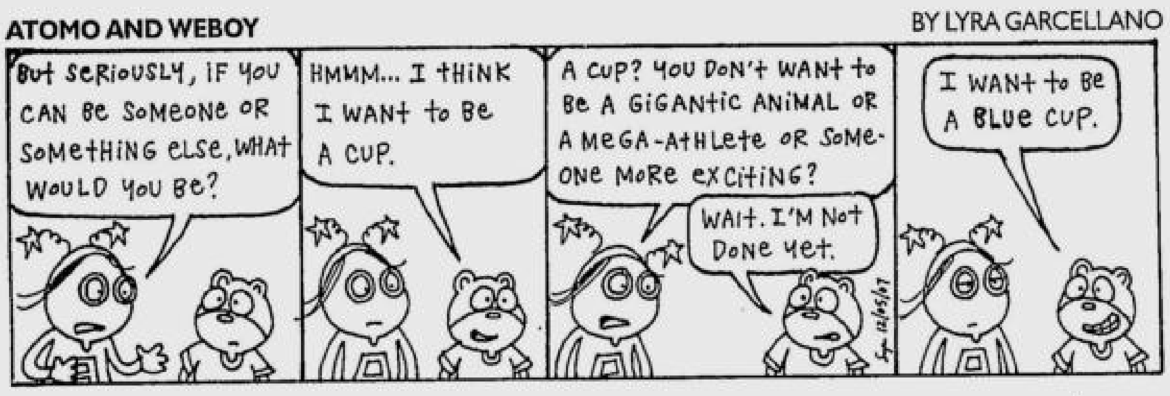
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


CRASH!
BAM! THUD!
SETTLE DOWN IN THERE, GUYS!
BANG! OW! CLANG!
OOF!
GUYS! GUYS!
WE HAVE BRUSSELS SPROUTS CASSEROLE IN THE FREEZER AND WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO COOK IT!
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO ROLL OUT THE BIG ARTILLERY.
I JUST PRAY WE NEVER HAVE TO USE IT.

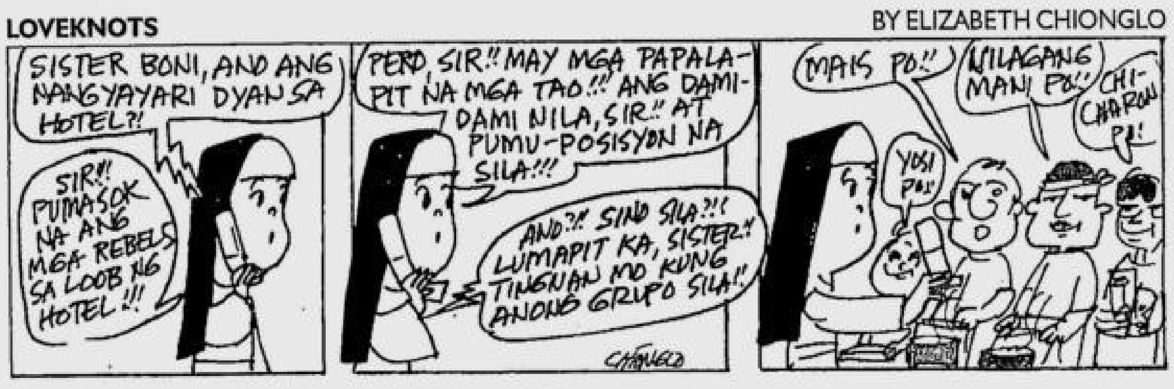
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


But seriously, if you can be someone or something else, what would you be?
HMMM... I think I want to be a cup.
A cup? You don't want to be a gigantic animal or a mega-athlete or someone more exciting?
Wait. I'm not done yet.
I want to be a blue cup.

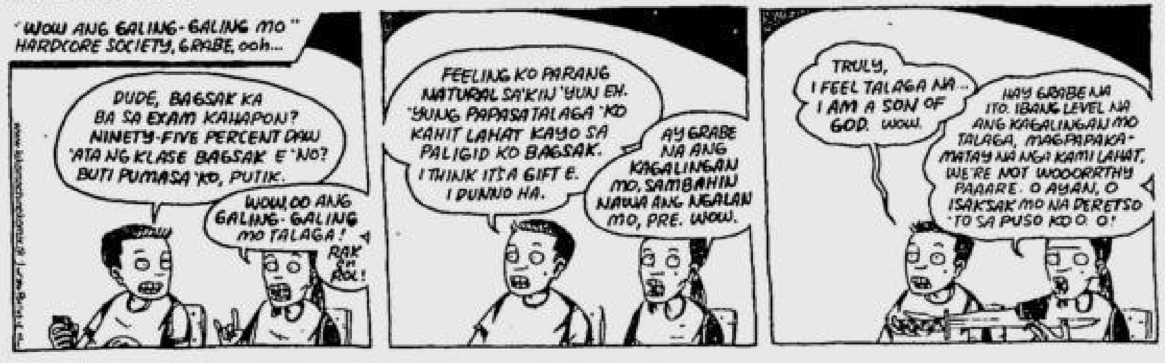
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SISTER BONI, ANO ANG NANGYAYARI DYAN SA HOTEL?!
SIR!! PUMASOK NA ANG MGA REBELS SA LOOB NG HOTEL!!!
PERO, SIR!! MAY MGA PAPALAPIT NA MGA TAO!!! ANG DAMI-DAMI NILA, SIR!! AT PUMU-POSISYON NA SILA!!!
ANO?!! SINO SILA?!! LUMAPIT KA, SISTER!! TINGNAN MO KUNG ANONG GRUPO SILA!!
MAIS PO!!
NILAGANG MANI PO!!
CHICHARON PO!
YOSI PO!
CHIONGLO

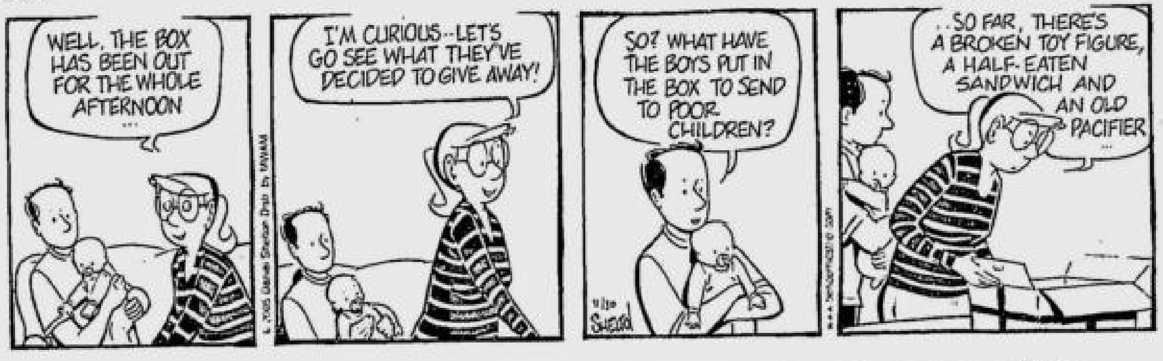
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

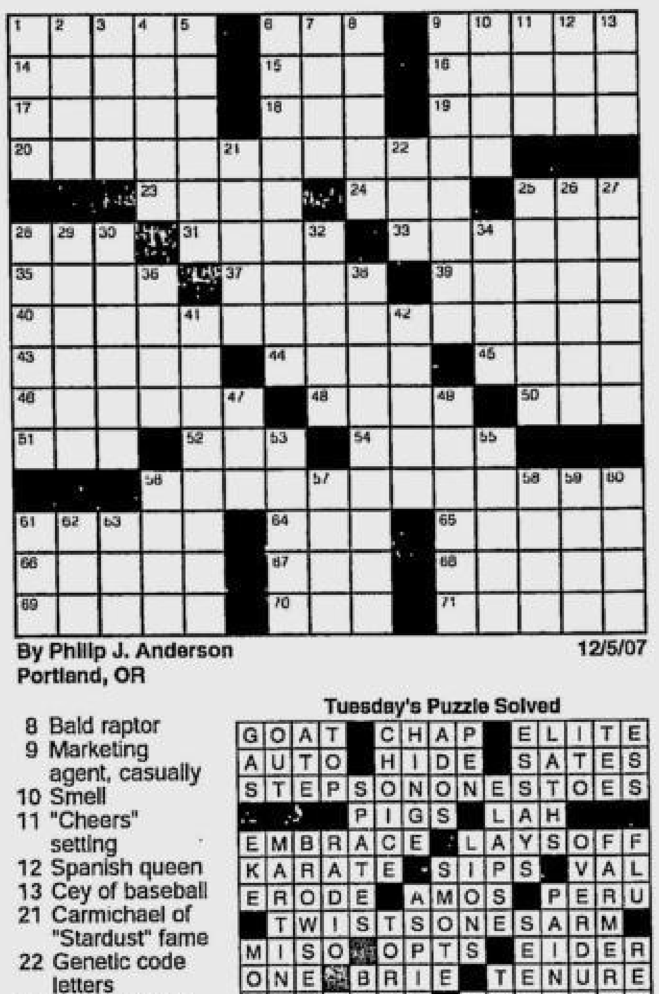

"WOW ANG GALING-GALING MO" HARDCORE SOCIETY, GRABE, ooh...
DUDE, BAGSAK KA BA SA EXAM KAHAPON? NINETY-FIVE PERCENT DAW 'ATA NG KLASE BAGSAK E 'NO? BUTI PUMASA 'KO, PUTIK.
WOW, OO ANG GALING-GALING MO TALAGA!
RAK EN ROL!
FEELING KO PARANG NATURAL SA'KIN 'YUN EH. 'YUNG PAPASA TALAGA 'KO KAHIT LAHAT KAYO SA PALIGID KO BAGSAK. I THINK IT'S A GIFT E. I DUNNO HA.
AY GRABE NA ANG KAGALINGAN MO, SAMBAHIN NAWA ANG NGALAN MO, PRE. WOW.
TRULY, I FEEL TALAGA NA... I AM A SON OF GOD. WOW.
HAY GRABE NA ITO. IBANG LEVEL NA ANG KAGALINGAN MO TALAGA, MAGPAPAKAMATAY NA NGA KAMI LAHAT, WE'RE NOT WOOORRTHY PAAARE. O AYAN, O ISAKSAK MO NA DERETSO 'TO SA PUSO KO O. O!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WELL, THE BOX HAS BEEN OUT FOR THE WHOLE AFTERNOON ...
I'M CURIOUS--LET'S GO SEE WHAT THEY'VE DECIDED TO GIVE AWAY!
SO? WHAT HAVE THE BOYS PUT IN THE BOX TO SEND TO POOR CHILDREN?
..SO FAR, THERE'S A BROKEN TOY FIGURE, A HALF-EATEN SANDWICH AND AN OLD PACIFIER ...
SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
12/5/07

ACROSS
1 Make a necessary change
6 Eng. honor
9 Temperate
14 Non-social type
15 Learning org.
16 "A Bell for __"
17 Minneapolis suburb
18 Response time
19 Navigational system
20 Sign of a shun?
23 Go away!
24 USNA grad
25 Obese
28 NYSE overseer
31 Asian oxen
33 Inscrutable
35 Gillette blade
37 Acquires
39 Dine at home
40 Far north post-wedding event?
43 Grassland
44 Satiric Mort
45 Old Atlanta arena
46 Employ
48 Blend
50 Ninny
51 Actress Ruby
52 Med. care plan
54 Food fad
56 Jazz record buyer?
61 Happen again
64 __ Abner
65 "__ Gay"
66 Foreign
67 Supped
68 Close competitor
69 Bottle material
70 Easterbrook or Howe
71 Act division

DOWN
1 Actor Baldwin
2 Extinct bird
3 Blue dye
4 Hangs in the balance
5 Worthless
6 Casual spectators
7 Boyfriend
8 Bald raptor
9 Marketing agent, casually
10 Smell
11 "Cheers" setting
12 Spanish queen
13 Cey of baseball
21 Carmichael of "Stardust" fame
22 Genetic code letters
25 Mohammad's daughter
26 Negatively charged atoms
27 Davis Cup game
28 Blessed
29 Constituent of natural gas
30 Cower
32 Fulton's power
34 Stoic philosopher
36 Pond growth
38 On the agenda
41 Domestic fowls
42 Psychologist Havelock
47 Standup comic Philips
49 Impedes
53 Earthenware vessels
55 Gin's partner
56 Stage signals
57 Population center
58 Make a motion
59 Lively enthusiasm
60 Last breath
61 Worn-out piece of cloth
62 Building wing
63 Successor of the OSS

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

G	O	A	T		C	H	A	P		E	L	I	T	E
A	U	T	O		H	I	D	E		S	A	T	E	S
S	T	E	P	S	O	N	O	N	E	S	T	O	E	S
				P	I	G	S		L	A	H			
E	M	B	R	A	C	E		L	A	Y	S	O	F	F
K	A	R	A	T	E		S	I	P	S		V	A	L
E	R	O	D	E		A	M	O	S		P	E	R	U
	T	W	I	S	T	S	O	N	E	S	A	R	M	
M	I	S	O		O	P	T	S		E	I	D	E	R
O	N	E		B	R	I	E		T	E	N	U	R	E
M	I	D	D	L	E	C		H	O	S	T	E	S	S
			E	A	R		I	O	T	A				
S	L	A	P	S	O	N	T	H	E	W	R	I	S	T
P	I	L	O	T		A	L	U	M		E	C	H	O
Y	E	A	T	S		E	L	M	S		F	E	E	T

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12/5/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're adventurous! You're bold and daring. You attempt amazing feats because you're naturally confident. You're very focused on whatever you do. It's important for you to get in touch with your goals. Once you know what you want to do, you'll do it. In the next year, you'll finish something you've been involved with for about nine years.

Birthdate of: Joan Didion, writer; Walt Disney, animator/film producer; Margaret Cho, comedian/humanitarian.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): As this month progresses, you'll find that others are increasingly generous to you. It's also a good time to apply for mortgages, loans or assistance from others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today fair Venus moves opposite your sign, where it will stay all month. This greatly improves all your relations with partners and close friends. People feel warm and chummy with you!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): If you're looking for a job this month, your prospects will improve. If you have a job, your relations with co-workers will improve. If you're retired, your health will improve.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Love and romance are in the stars for you this month! Enjoy flirtations and fun, social occasions. This is your month to party!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You'll enjoy decorating your home this month. You want to make where you live look more attractive. This is important to you because, as a Leo, your home is your castle.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might do something to earn money from writing, reading or studying this month. The entire month is an excellent time to sell, market, teach, act or communicate to others

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You likely can earn more money this month. Let's hope you do, because you'll also be spending it! You want to buy beautiful things for yourself and loved ones.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Today Venus moves into your sign, where it will stay for the rest of the month. This makes you unusually charming and pleasant with everyone. What a lovely way to end the year!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You're becoming more pleased with yourself. This is in a good way, not a puffed-up way. You're appreciating who you are, and this is a good thing!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Relations with friends and groups definitely will improve this month. Some of you will have a friendship that moves into something more serious.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Relations with bosses, parents and authority figures definitely are going to improve this month. People are impressed with you. In turn, you appear diplomatic and professional.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Travel for pleasure this month if you can. You will adore learning anything new. Educational adventures also please you.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu By Dave Green

		6		8		9		
	7		3		9		2	
	5						4	
		9	1	3	7	6		
			9		6			
			8		5			
	9	8				7	3	
2								8
	4	3	2	7	8	5	1	

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/05

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

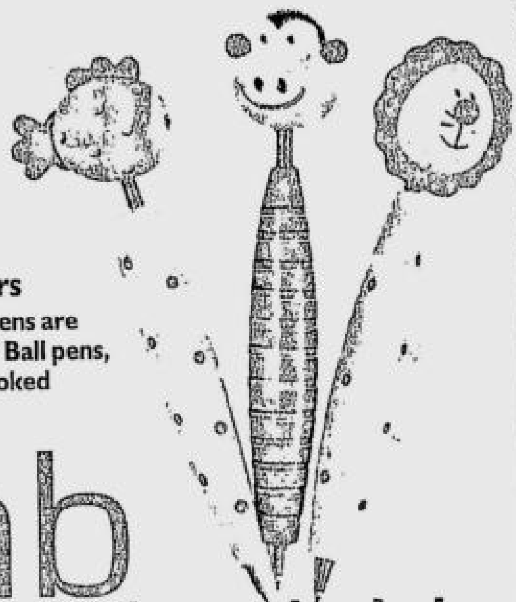
Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	7	1	8	4	6	2	3	5
3	6	5	2	7	9	1	8	4
2	8	4	3	1	5	9	6	7
8	1	7	5	2	3	4	9	6
4	5	2	9	6	1	8	7	3
6	9	3	7	8	4	5	2	1
7	4	9	6	5	2	3	1	8
1	2	6	4	3	8	7	5	9
5	3	8	1	9	7	6	4	2

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/04

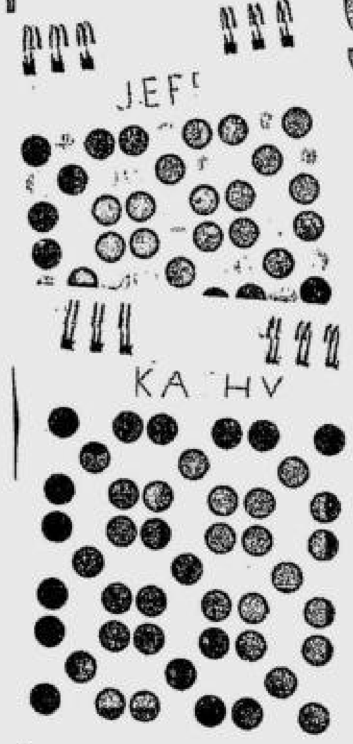
For your super stylish friend
"For all the accessories she already owns." Accessory holder, P350, beadlady.multiply.com



Stocking stuffers
"These adorable pens are super useful, too!" Ball pens, P50 each, Fully Booked

Fab and affordable gifts

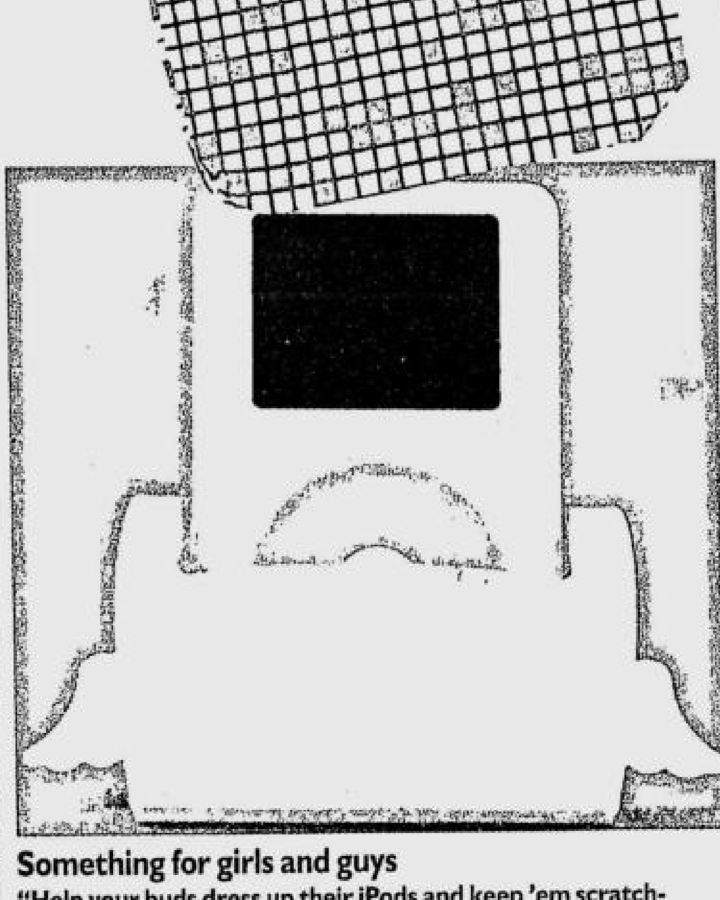
Photos by Dakila Angeles with Monica Barretto



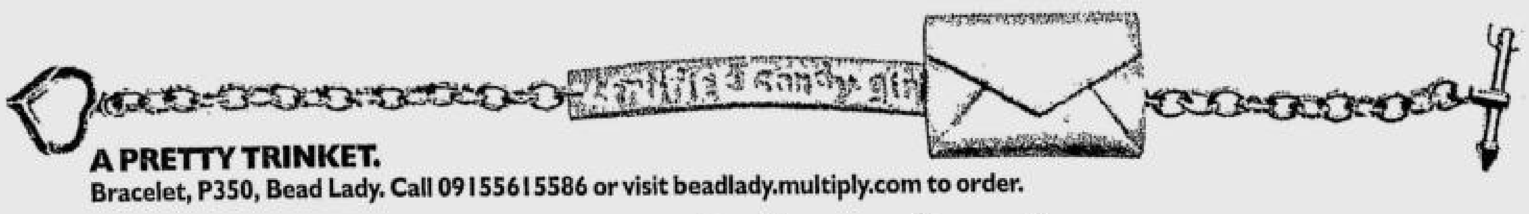
For the friend who has everything "give her a gift that's made specially for her"

PERSONALIZED notebook, P75, Printed Matter

For the picky friend
"So cute she'll make this her everyday bag." Tote, P395, Topshop



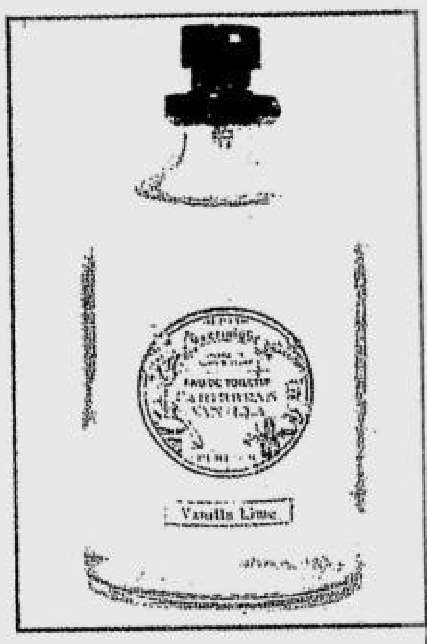
Something for girls and guys
"Help your buds dress up their iPods and keep 'em scratch-free." iPod holder, P250, Powerbooks



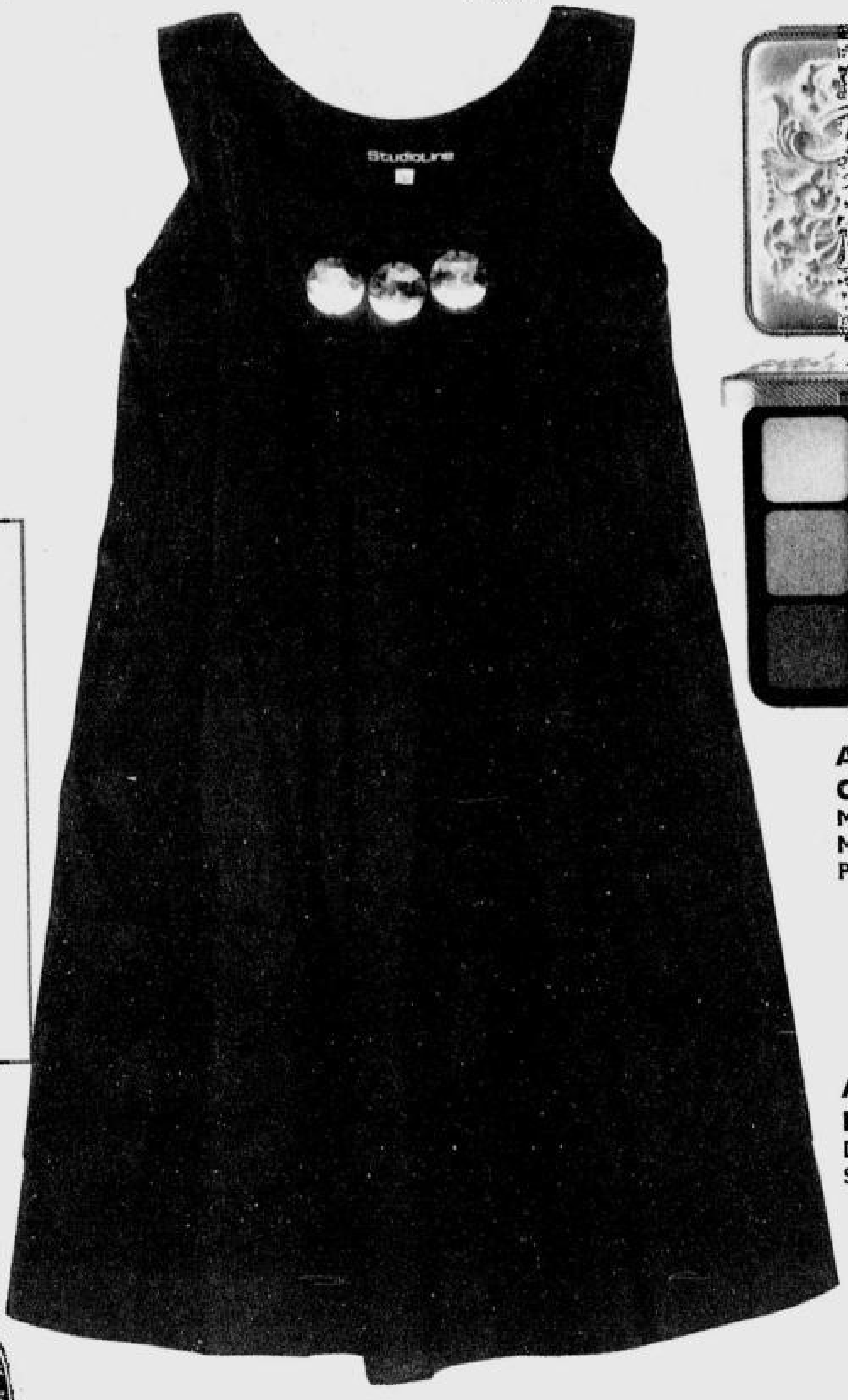
A PRETTY TRINKET.
Bracelet, P350, Bead Lady. Call 09155615586 or visit beadlady.multiply.com to order.

Pretty and bright

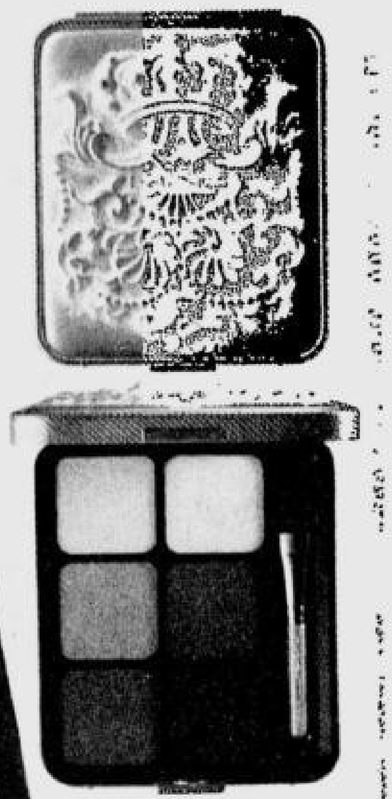
Cosmetics, trinkets, and clothes make great presents for high school teenage girls



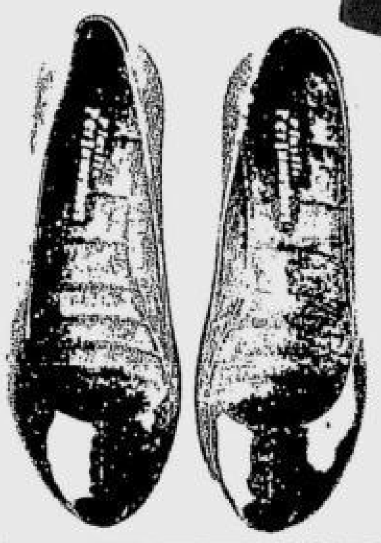
A FESTIVE, HOLIDAY SCENT.
Caribbean Vanilla eau de toilette in Vanilla Lime, P995, Rustan's



A PARTY-READY DRESS.
Dress, P1,249.75, SM Studio Line



A LUXE COMPACT.
MAC Royal Assets Metallic Eyes, P2,100, Rustan's

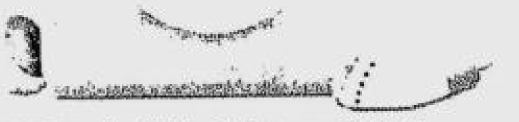


A BRIGHT AND HAPPY PAIR OF FLATS.
Flats, P350, Prima Donna (Megamall Bldg B 3/F)

iPod
Videos
Photos
Podcasts
Extras
Settings
Shuffle Songs
Now Playing

Sweet presents

Sugar Sugar mag staff offer bright Christmas gift ideas



GOOD and reliable Christmas gift: iPod

KAI MAGSANOC, EDITOR in chief—"An MP3 player. Music can change your life just as it can brighten up your day. I believe that there is a song that tells of every significant part of our lives, and there's nothing like a good and reliable MP3 player that keeps our special life songs always with us and just a click away."

Jobelle Tayawa, art director—"Moleskine notebooks are a classic and classy Christmas present. Compared to planners, these notebooks will probably hold a mother-load of ideas unbound by time and date. What better way to be remembered: Moleskines age gracefully—hopefully memories of the sender, too."

Nikki Santiago, associate editor—"A good book. Books can widen our perspective on a lot of things. Reading one is an experience in itself. So, share the experience."

Ana Purugganan, fashion and lifestyle associate—"A one-of-a-kind accessory such as a bracelet or necklace. Asian-inspired pieces are always a looker for their earthy, intricate designs. Wear a piece of your heritage!"

Eunice Lucero, beauty associate—"This Christmas, I'm all about skincare: Khiel's Since 1851 Creme de Corps Collection is classic and totally luxurious. It pampers dried and stressed out holiday skin and the fact that it's unisex makes it all the more ideal for gift-giving."

Rochelle Fernando, editorial assistant—"Personalized tees. Nothing can be more special than gifts with a personal touch. Personalized tees are everywhere in the net; you can ask them to print anything on the shirt, from your favorite cartoon characters to your favorite expression. Gifts like these truly touch the heart. After all, it's the thought and effort that really matter."

Tattoo art competition

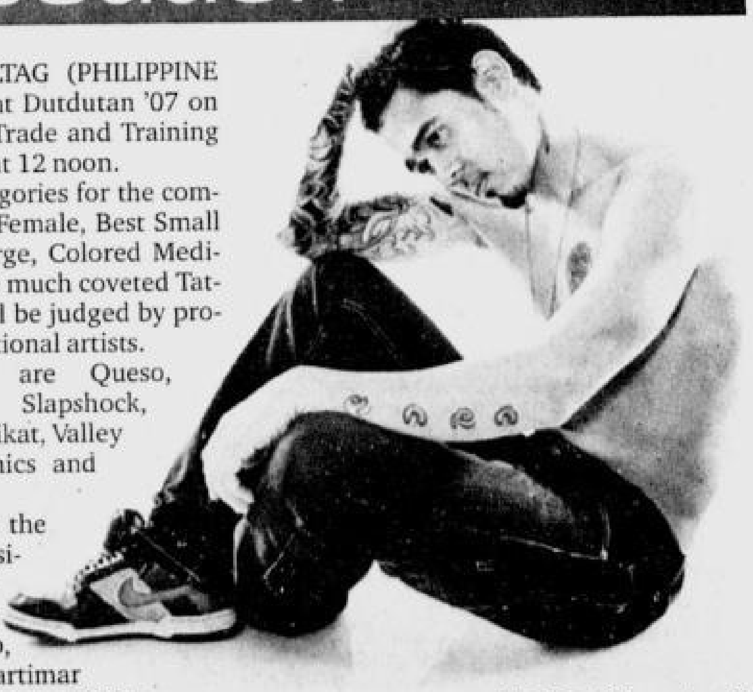
MODEL Abby

TRIBAL GEAR AND PHILTAG (PHILIPPINE Tattoo Artist Guild) present Dutdutan '07 on Dec. 15 at the Philippine Trade and Training Center Hall B. Gates open at 12 noon.

There will be seven categories for the competition: Best Tribal, Best Female, Best Small Piece, Black and Grey Large, Colored Medium, Colored Large and the much coveted Tattoo of the Night which will be judged by professional local and international artists.

Featured performers are Queso, Kamikazee, Urbandub, Slapshock, Greyhoundz, D-Coy, Sinosikat, Valley of Chrome, Sinag, Beatnics and Concrete Sam.

Tickets are available at the gate and at PhilTAG president Ricky Sta. Ana's studio at Skinworkz Tattoo and Body Piercing Shop, located at Pasilyo D19 Cartimar Arcade, Pasay City. Call (02) 8455001.

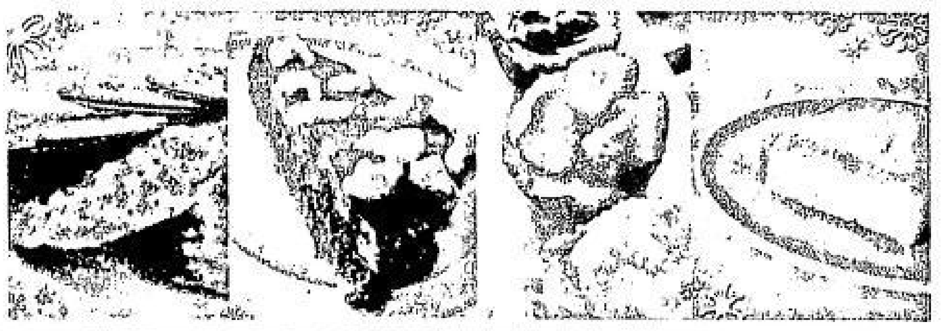


PAOLO of Moonstar 88

Treats for your Christmas cravings

Text and photos by Zee Castro
2bU! Correspondent

BE IT TO SATISFY YOUR sweet tooth or to give away as gifts to family and friends, here are delicious holiday treats fit for different tastes, purposes and budgets.



Flavor-packed

THESE AUTHENTIC, HOME-MADE French treats are perfect with coffee. Lace Crisps by Sucre et Sel. P120 (small), P250 (big). Call Kitchen's Best by Roselyn at 3818518.

With its hefty amount of chocolate ganache and oozing caramel, Christina's Kitchen's Turtle Pie is every bit sinfully delicious! Warning: After the first bite, you won't be able to put your fork down. P390/ 9-inch. Order from Christina's Kitchen. Call 3842243, 3734562 or 0920-5428408.

The perfect-sized cheesecake packed with the right amount of flavor. P250/ 6 pcs. Order from Just Sweets. Call 0922-8137004 (Sue) or 0928-4133485 (Zem).

Bread pudding has never been this good! Each bite bursts with creamy *leche flan* goodness. Old-fashioned Bread Pudding. P160/ 4x7 loaf.

Order from Christina's Kitchen. Call 3842243.

E-mail the author at zemirah@gmail.com.

Luxe treats

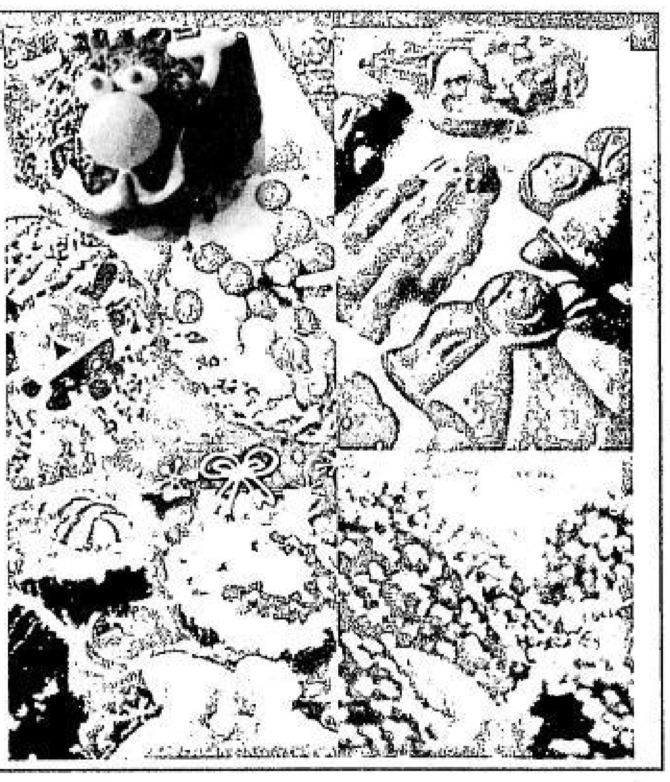
FILL YOUR HOME WITH THE AROMA of the holidays with this intricately decorated Gingerbread House. P1,300 (with box). Order from the International School for Culinary Arts and Hotel Management (ISCAHM), 4/F, FBR Bldg. Katipunan, QC. Call 9268888 (look for Marinette).

Made of the finest of ingredients, these flavor-packed pieces of indulgence from Aubergine will soon be the most sought-after macaroons in town. Order from Aubergine Restaurant and Patisserie, 2/F 32nd and 5th Ave, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Call 8569888.

Take a bite of this luscious and creamy dessert and you'll know why this has been tagged as one of Manila's best. Banana Toffee Pie. P550/ 9-inch.

Choose a combination of Fudge Brownies, Pecan Bars, Food for the Gods, or Caramel Walnut. All Time Favorite, P280/ box of 14. Larger packages available. Order from Kitchen's Best by Roselyn. Call 3818518, 5756012 or 8120908.

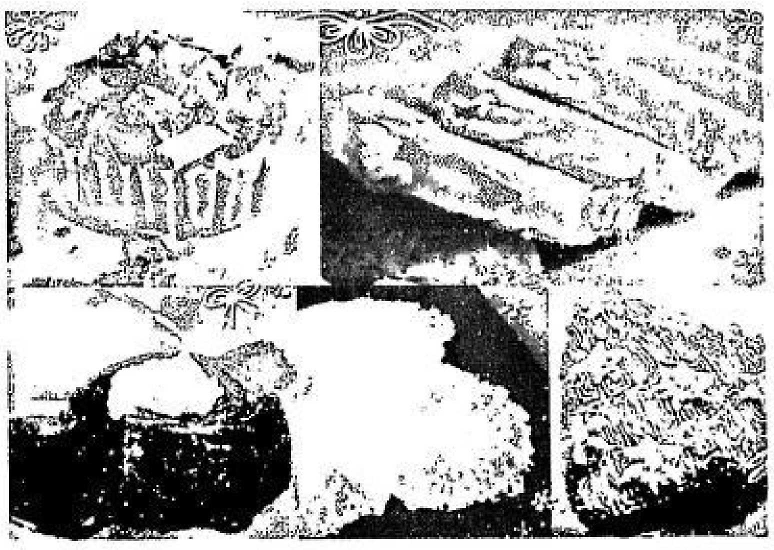
Adorable details



THESE TRENDY TREATS ARE SURE TO CATCH the eye of kids and adults alike. Use these Caramel Apples as decorations, table centerpieces or giveaways for *inaanaks* out to collect their Christmas *aguinaldos*. P50-P80 each. Order from SanFo Treats, with branches in Glorietta, Robinson's Galleria, Paseo Center Makati, The Block SM North, SM Megamall, Robinsons Place Ermita, The Fun Ranch at Frontera Verde. For info on catering services, visit www.sanfotreats.com

These bite-sized cupcakes certainly live up to Belly Sweet's tagline "One bite is never enough!" Mini-cupcakes, P100/ 6 pcs, P190/ 12 pcs. Order from Belly Sweet. Call 8867869, 8185034, 0917-8516600 or 0917-5280744. (Look for Tara or Ritchie).

These yummy and super affordable giveaways are sure to fit your holiday budget. Chocolate Lollipops, P10-P20. Chocolate Crispies, P45/ box of 45; P120/ box of 24. Order from Maria's House of Home Baked Cakes and Pastries. Call 9267816, 4829130 or 0928-4915285.



Party perfect

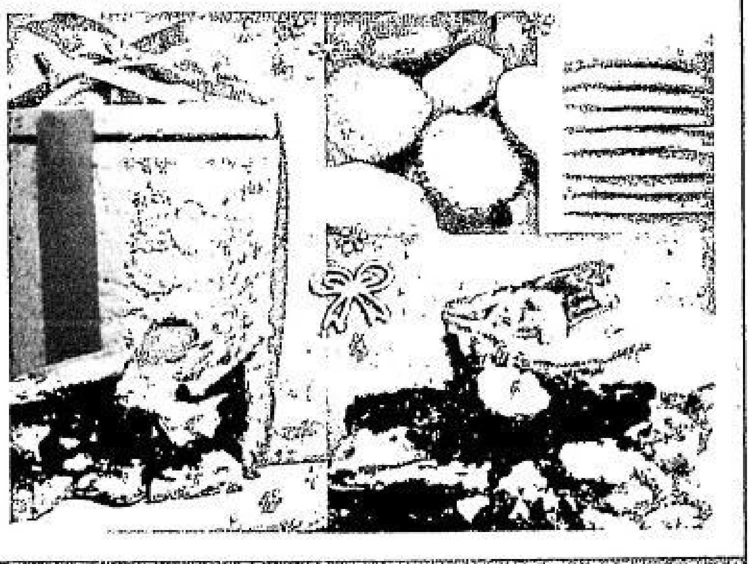
ADD DRAMA TO YOUR DINNER parties by serving these Dark Truffle Cupcakes for dessert. P130/ 4 pcs. Order from Just Sweets. Call 0922-8137004 (Sue) or 0928-4133485 (Zem).

This moist and flavorful Carrot Walnut cake is the perfect accompaniment to after-dinner coffee or tea. P200/ loaf. Order from Just Sweets, 0922-8137004.

These delectable cakes can add a wow-moment to your dinner parties. Pop into the microwave for 10 seconds, add a dollop of cream, and watch as your guests ooh and ahh over this deliciously gooey dessert. Molten Lava Cake, P68 each. Order from Oz Café, UP Bahay ng Alumni. Call 6580091 or 0920-9073219.

No one will be able to resist these savory Parmesan Crisps! These can be served along with appetizers and can also be the perfect gift for the party hostess. P410 (small can), P590 (big can). Comes in Christmas packaging. Order from Belly Sweet. Call 8867869, 8185034, 0917-8516600 or 0917-5280744. (Look for Tara or Ritchie)

These petite cakes are almost too cute to eat! The yummy icing fittingly combines with the moist cake. P125 each. Available in butter and chocolate flavors, and in Christmas Stocking, Snowman, Christmas Tree, Candy Cane, and Wreath designs. For larger Motif Cakes, call Sweet Belly at 8867869.



Giveaways

KITCHEN BEST'S CHOCOLATE-covered almond brittle is bound to satisfy your sweet tooth. P180/ 150g. Comes packaged in a gold jar. Larger sizes available. Call 3818518 for orders.

These small treats are great Christmas giveaways to officemates and friends.

Yema Balls, P140/ 25 pcs. Polvoron, P135/ 25 pcs. Pili Nut Macaroons, P145/ 12 pcs. Comes in Christmas packaging. Also available in larger quantities. Call Sweet Belly at 8867869.

Oatmeal Crisps. P160 for 16 pcs, P200 for 32 pcs. Order from Just Sweets. Call 0922-8137004. Revel Bars P120/ 8 pcs, P220/ 16 pcs. Order from Just Sweets, 0922-8137004.

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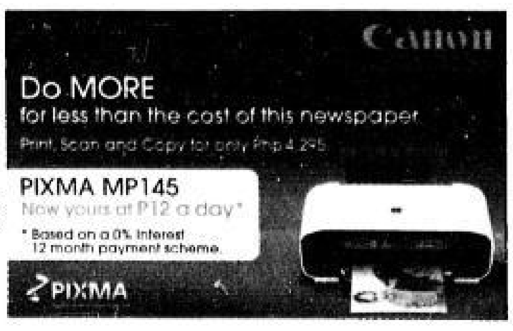
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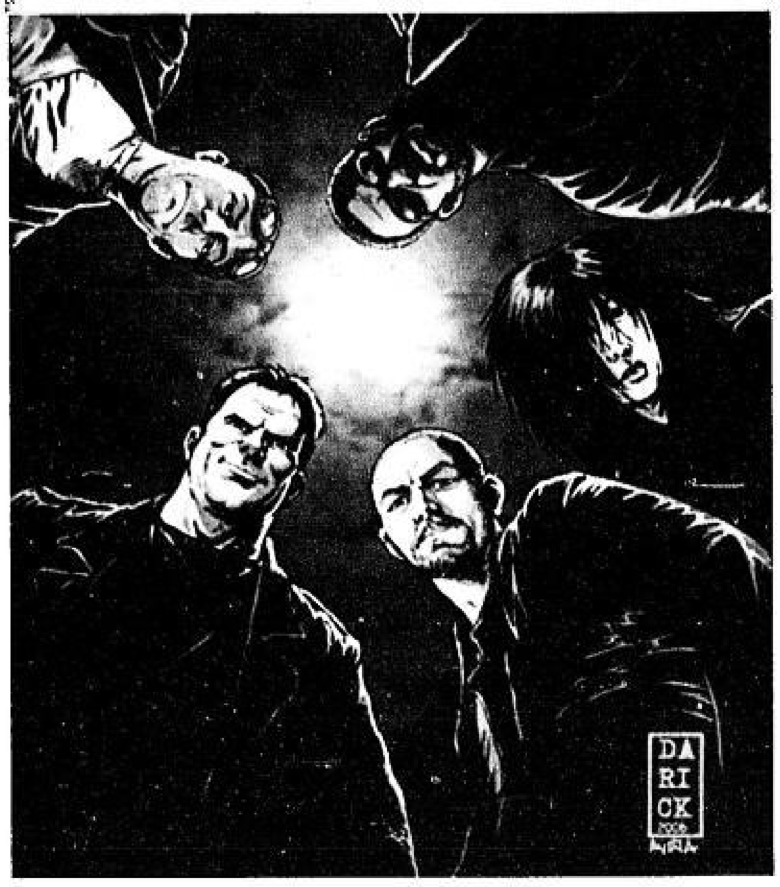
X-Men for Christmas



By Adrian M. Dy
2bU! Correspondent

...OR MAYBE NOT. IT USED TO be that when shopping for the comics fan, you could get something that's a relative no-brainer like the latest collection of Superman or X-Men. Nowadays, with the medium expanding to so much more than just capes and costumes, comic book fans have become more discerning and, as a result, want more than just the usual diabolic doomsday devices and secret headquarters. So if you want to get that friend something other than "The Sandman" (he probably has them all) or "Wonder Woman" (she's probably waiting for Gail Simone's issues to be collected), read on!

"Demo: The Collected Edition"

Brian Wood (writer) and Becky Cloonan (artist)

It was supposed to be an alternate look at the X-Men concept of young men and women dealing with special powers. Midway through the series, the powers angle got dropped and that's when the book really kicks into high gear. Wood nails relationships like nobody's business, from the after-effects of a suicide in "Mixtape," the begin-

> Comic book fans want more than the usual diabolic doomsday devices and secret headquarters

X-MEN/ D2

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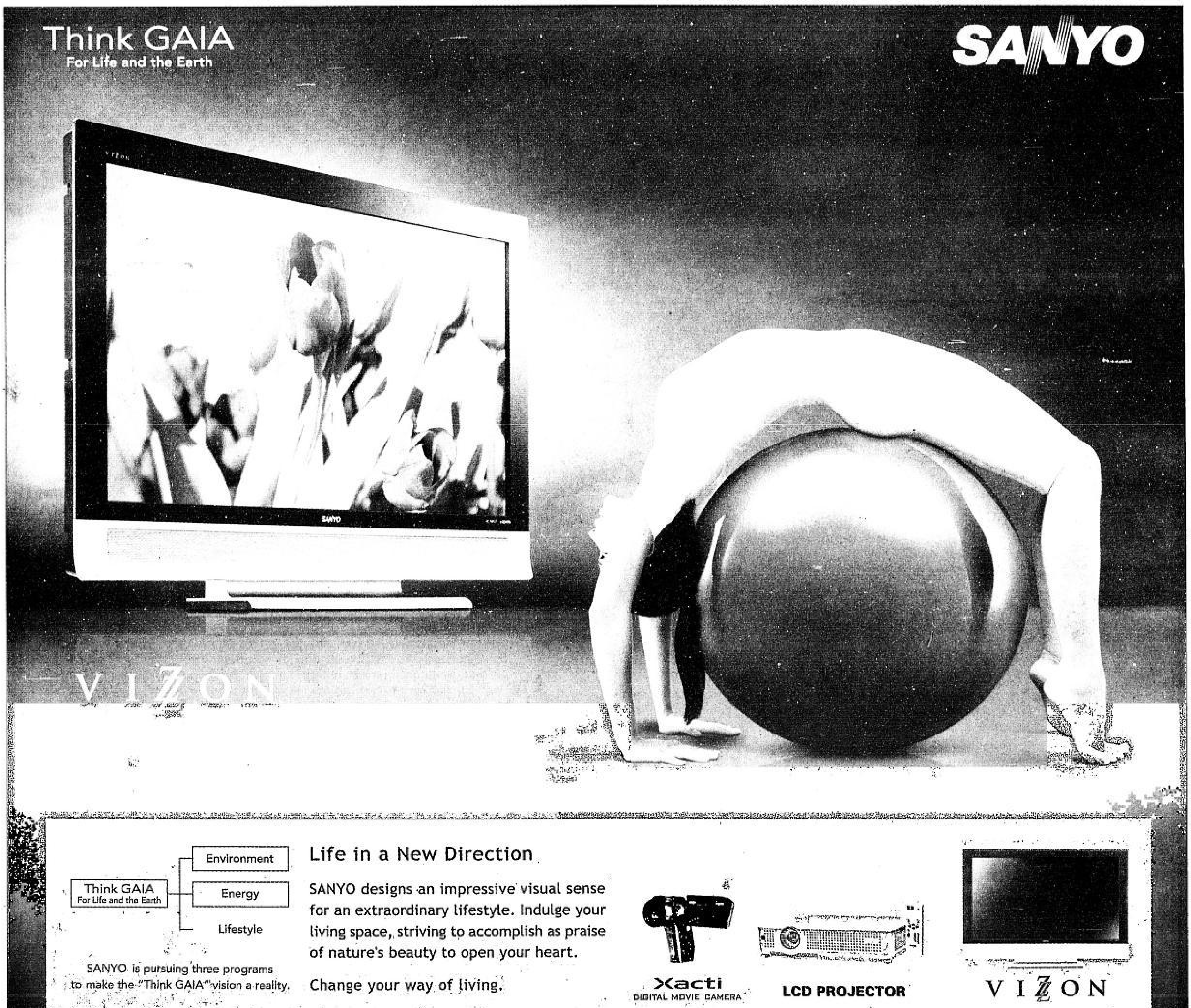
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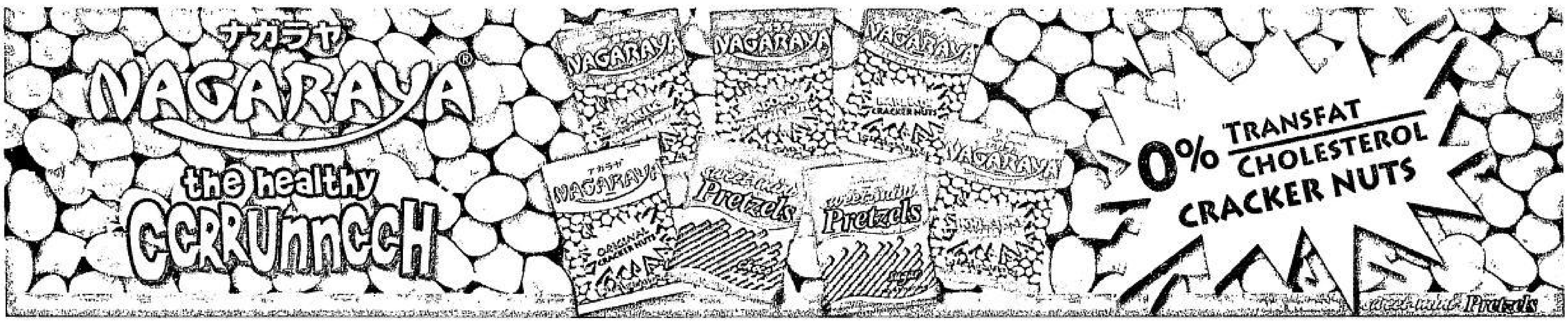
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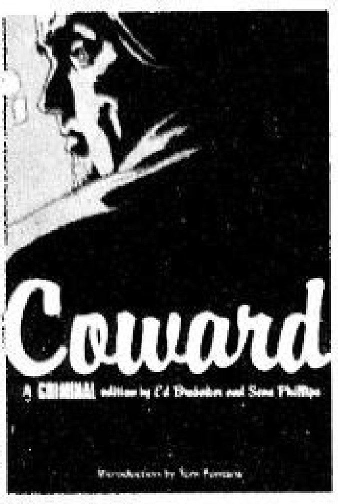
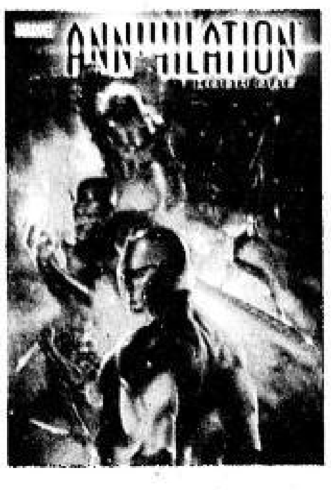
X-Men for Christmas

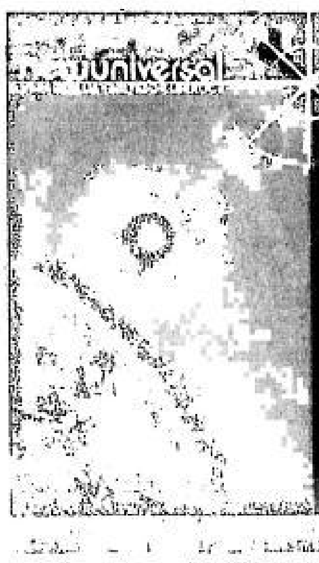
From page D1





PLANET HULK
THE INCREDIBLE HULK

DARK TOWER
THE GUNSLINGER BORN



HEROES
VOLUME ONE

BLACK DOSSIER
ALAN MOORE KEVIN O'NEILL

ning of the end in "Breaking Up," to the series' final issue, a poem in comics form, "Mon Dernier Jour Avec Toi (My Last Day with You)." Cloonan, whose manga-inspired drawings would have normally been out of place here, captures youth at its peak. A must-buy for the sensitive comics fan.

"El Cazador"

Chuck Dixon (writer) and Steve Epting (artist)

Back when CrossGen Comics was doing everything but superheroes, "El Cazador" debuted just as "Pirates of the Caribbean" began to set sail on the silver screen. It was a critical darling that died an untimely death when CrossGen walked the plank. Thankfully, Hyperion was able to pick up the reprint rights, finally compiling the series. These aren't Johnny Depp-esque pirates that prance around spouting non-sequiturs; these are violent, backstabbing thieves and murderers! And yes, it does end on a cliffhanger that will probably be never resolved, but if adventures on the high sea are your idea of a fun time, you owe it to yourself to pick this one up.

"Criminal: Coward"

Ed Brubaker (writer) and Sean Phillips (artist)

Leo is a legend among the criminal underworld for his street smarts and pickpocketing skills. He's also a man of principles, refusing to do jobs if they don't pass his strict criteria. But when he does let his standards slip, everything goes to hell in a hand basket, and people begin to die. Brubaker and Phillips have collaborated before on "Sleeper," the tale of a metahuman double agent. Here, they throw out the powers and keep the grittiness, producing this comic noir masterpiece.

"Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Season 8: The Long Way Home"

Joss Whedon (writer) and Georges Jeanty (artist)

Joss Whedon proves that you can go home, returning to the creation that made him famous: Buffy Summers, the Slayer. Set after the events of the TV series finale, Whedon shows that while Sunnydale is gone, evil still roams the Earth. Good thing the Scooby Gang is still around, with Buffy at the forefront. If you loved the series, prepare to be entertained. Take note though: Casual fans may be a bit lost concerning some of the faces in the supporting cast. If that happens, (like it did to me), bite the bullet and boot up Wikipedia.

"Annihilation" (3 books)

Various writers and artists

"Planet Hulk" (hardcover)

Greg Pak (writer) and various artists

While the rest of the Marvel universe was in a Civil War, and the DC universe was in the midst of an Infinite Crisis, these two events provided more sheer thrill and action, despite staying under the radar of most fans. In "Annihilation," the forces of the Negative Zone make a grand push, devastating the Kree and Skrull empires, and forcing a rag-tag collection of Marvel space heroes like Quasar, Nova, Drax the Destroyer and Moondragon to band together to prevent the "Annihilation Wave" from reaching Earth and destroying the universe. "Planet Hulk," on the other hand, showcases the Hulk in what is perhaps his best story as a character. Exiled to a gladiator planet, the Hulk pulls a Maximus Meridius to overthrow a planet-wide dictatorship. Both comic events were so popular that they spawned sequels ("Annihilation: Conquest" and "World War Hulk"), currently ongoing in the individual issues.

"The Boys: The Name of the Game"

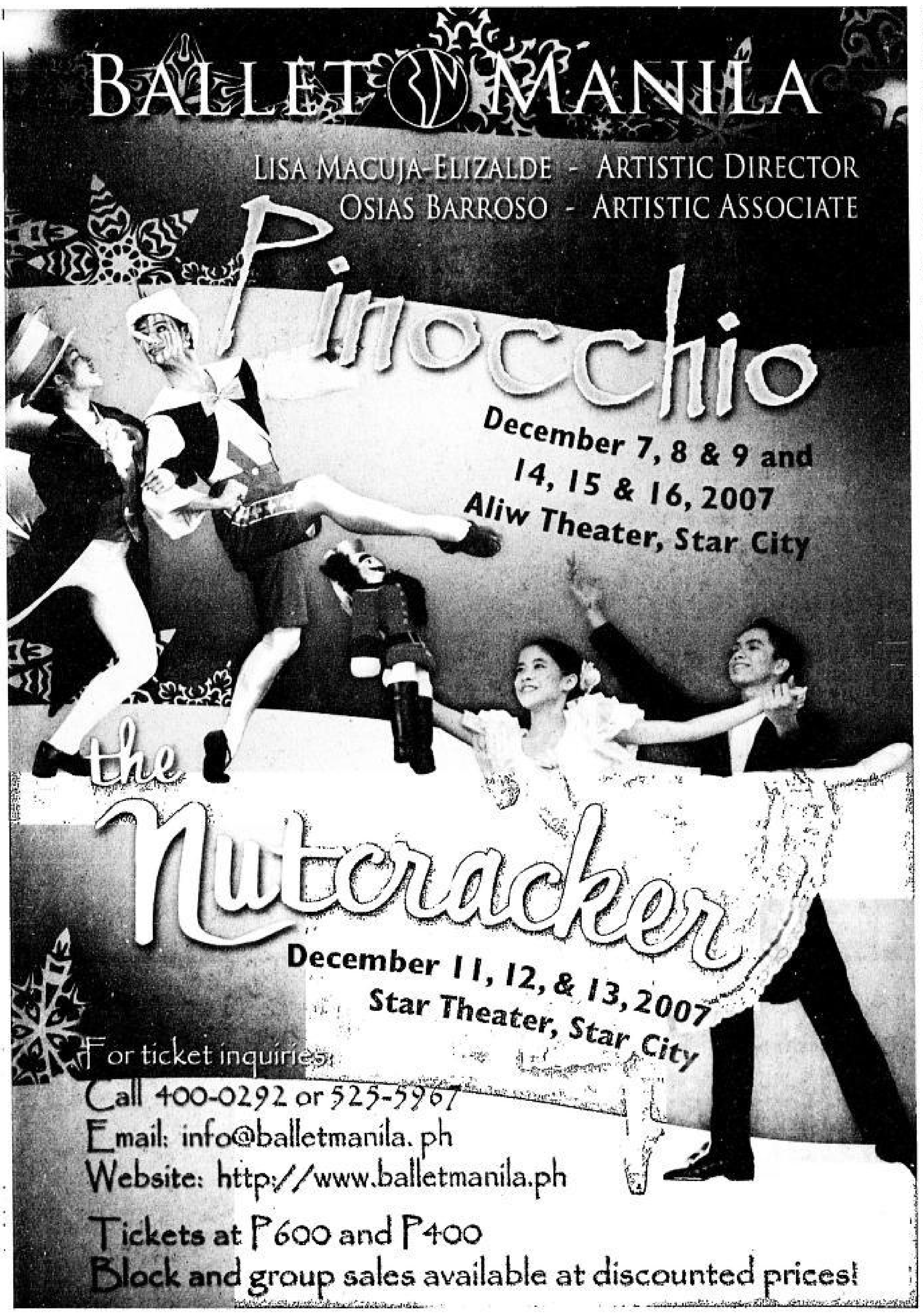
Garth Ennis (writer) and Darick Robertson (artist)

Believe me when I say that this book is for mature audiences only. DC Comics got so squeamish about it that they allowed its creators to take it to Dynamite Entertainment to get published. With that out of the way, this book is sure to appeal to those who are sick and tired of superheroes getting the spotlight. That's the same line of thinking of Billy Butcher, the leader of a team of covert operatives whose job is to keep the superhero population in line. Did a superhero cause a bunch of civilian casualties? Maybe murdered a secret gay lover? That's when The Boys spring into action and they don't pull any punches.

"Newuniversal: Everything Went White"

Warren Ellis (writer) and Salvador Larroca (artist)

Comics are being adapted into movies more often now, and fans spend quite a bit of time wondering who'll be wearing the tights of characters that have yet to make the leap to the big screen. Newuniversal turns this on its head slightly, with Larocca drawing the characters to look like big Hollywood stars such as Angelina Jolie, Bruce Willis and Johnny Depp. But stunning visuals aside, the story, set on an alternate Earth (9/11 never happened, Hillary Clinton is president of the USA), is typical quirky—but thought-provoking—Ellis fodder that has a hint of "Heroes." Ever experienced reading a comic that's a lot like watching a movie? Then get "Newuniversal."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Caveat emptor

THINKING OF GETTING ONE OF THE following for someone this Christmas? Be careful, he or she might be taking a quick trip to the return section of your local bookstore or comics shop…

"The Gunslinger Born: The Dark Tower"

Stephen King, Peter David and Robin Furth (writers), and Jae Lee (artist)

While it's great to see Stephen King's creation in the funny books, the story is mostly an adaptation of Roland's flashback story from the novel "Wizard and Glass." The real original stuff, a series of prose stories at the end of each individual issue by Robin Furth that served to flesh out the backstory of other characters and events are not in this collection.

"Heroes: Volume One"

Various writers and artists

While the gorgeous Alex Ross cover will surely take any "Heroes" fan's breath away, the contents of this book are nothing special. The 34 short strips can all be found online and for free (and legally I must add!), which any true "Heroes" addict has probably taken advantage of by saving them all to his or her hard drive.

"The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen: The Black Dossier"

Alan Moore (writer) and Kevin O'Neill (artist)

It isn't out of the question to see this on a discerning comic book fan's gift list. After all, it is the long-awaited last book in the LoEG trilogy, and it's written by comic god Alan Moore. The problem? Copyright issues prevent the book from being sold outside of the United States of America. Get an auntie to pack it in a *balikbayan* box if you're desperate, because you might not ever find it on our shores.

UP Writers' Night, First Book Award on Dec. 8

THE UP INSTITUTE OF Creative Writing is holding the traditional UP Writers' Night on Dec. 8 in UP Diliman.

The event kicks off at 5 p.m. with the awarding ceremony of the Madrigal-Gonzalez Best First Book Award at Teatro Hermogenes Ylagan, Bulwagang Rizal (Faculty Center) in the Diliman campus.

The award was established in February 2001 by the Madrigal-Gonzalez family, represented by Gizela Gonzalez Montinola.

The award encourages writers who have published a first work in English and Filipino to continue in the pursuit of literary excellence.

This year's shortlisted works are:

Dean Francis Alfar's "Salamanca," Barbara-Ann Gamboa Lewis' "Barefoot in Fire (creative nonfiction);

Maria Isabel Garcia's "Science Solitaire" (essays); Rica Bolipata-Santos' "Love, Desire, Children, Etc. (creative nonfiction);

Helen Yap's "From Inside the Berlin Wall" (creative nonfiction); and Katrin De Guia's "Kapwa: The Self In The Other" (creation nonfiction).

The awarding will be followed by the launching of the maiden issue of the UP-ICW's new literary journal, "Likhaan 2007: The Journal of Contemporary Philippine Literature," with José Y. Dalisay as issue editor, and J. Neil Garcia and Lilia Quindoza Santiago as associate editors.

UP Diliman chancellor Sergio S. Cao, will be the guest of honor.

Next will be the party featuring bands and individual artists, including Heber Bartolome, DJ Alvaro, dancer/choreographer Myra Beltran, zitar player Joey Valenciano, ventriloquist Ony Carcamo, experimental artist Yanna Acosta, Romancing Venus, and poets Marne Kilates and Teo Antonio.

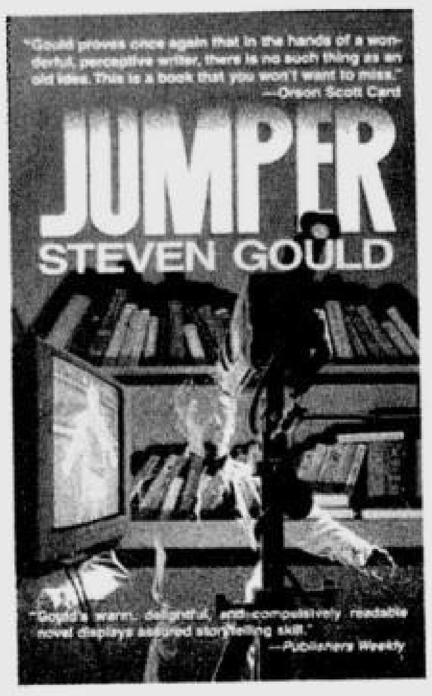
Daring writers join a mock fashion show to be staged by campus groups such as UP Quill, UP Speca, UP Ugat and UP Writers Club.

For more information on the 2007 Writers' Night, call Eva Cadiz at 9221830.

Book it

From page D4

ceremony, you need to check out Shirley's voyage, from 12th man on several NBA teams, jumping cross-country on private jets, to playing for minor leagues and missing the flight home. Sprinkle with some foreign flair as Shirley packs his bags to play abroad as an import, and you have a slam dunk for sports fans.


"Gould proves once again that in the hands of a wonderful, perceptive writer, there is no such thing as an old idea. This is a book that you won't want to miss." —Orson Scott Card
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'Pinoy Pride'

Obvious Pick: "Anything" by Jessica Zafra

My Pick: "Girl Trouble" by Alan Navarra

"Girl Trouble" is a visual odyssey in more ways than one. Discussing everyone's favorite topic, love, Navarra's words etch graffiti into your cerebrum, its method of delivery leap-frogging from travelogue, to dialogue, to mixtape playlists. What makes the book so darn memorable and utterly gift-worthy though, are the stunning black and white visuals, mostly artfully crafted sets of photos. On their own, the words and the pictures are strong, but together, they conjure up feelings of unrequited love in the best and the worst possible ways.

'Oh Mushy-Mush Mush'

Obvious Pick: "Dear John" by Nicholas Sparks

My Pick: "Starter for 10" by David Nicholls

Let me spoil the Nicholas Sparks story for you: Someone dies. No surprise there, huh? What may surprise you is this novel by Nicholls (which was also turned into a movie that never reached our shores). Brian is a college freshman, whose main goal in life is to win big on the University Challenge. Think battle of the brains. Things really get rolling though when he falls for hottie Alice, who is also going to compete. Do you know that cringe-inducing moment when you know something is bound to go wrong but you just can't help but look? You'll get that feeling over and over again in this romantic coming of age tale, and boy, you really won't be able to stop looking.

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David Nicholls
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Old reliables

EVERYONE HAS A LIST OF OLD books that he will push on unsuspecting friends. And what better time to recommend these books than on Christmas? At the very least, they'll be reading the first chapter ... and then they'll be hooked. This is my list of old reliables, where you'll find a few gift ideas (and maybe a book or two for yourself).

"Ender's Game" by Orson Scott Card

Messed up kid geniuses saving the world from an alien invasion. One of the best sci-fi books.

"Pixel Juice by Jeff Noon"

The sheer amount of ideas that Noon tosses around casually in his short stories is insane but a joy to read.

"The Prestige" by Christopher Priest

So different from the movie but still equally compelling. Debate amongst yourselves as to which ending is cooler.

"State of Fear" by Michael Crichton

Guaranteed to make anyone's head start spinning: "Wait, that was a pretty convincing argument against global warming!"

"Sputnik Sweetheart" by Haruki Murakami

Parallel worlds, unrequited love, and an exploration of how we really do not know the people we live with. My favorite Murakami book.

"Dawnthief" by James Barclay

The first book in a double trilogy of what can only be the most underrated fantasy trilogy in existence.

"Pattern Recognition" by William Gibson

Science fiction set in the modern world. Gibson absolutely nails our Internet-driven world in this story of a cool hunter's search for the anonymous creator of a series of nu-vo film clips that have been all the range in cyberspace. (YouTube anyone?)

"Haunted" by Chuck Palahniuk

Do not give to the easily squeamish! Flat-out gross and mind scarring in some parts, but the Survivor-meets-Canterbury Tales framing device keeps you glued to your seat.

"The Man Who Ate Everything" by Jeffrey Steingarten

Erudite writing combined with the passion of a true foodie makes me want to eat everything in this book.

"Blankets" by Craig Thompson

For the last few dissenters who say that comics (sorry, graphic novels) still can't be the equal of actual books: Read this author's memoir and get back to me afterwards.

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HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Information for Living Right

Question

Doesn't the high amount of sugar in carbonated soft drinks make children hyperactive?

Answer

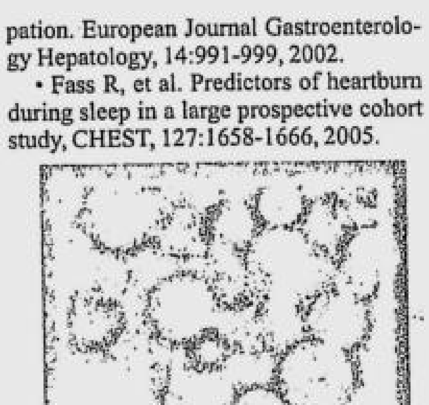
No, the sugar in carbonated soft drinks does not cause children to be hyperactive. Scientists have tested theories about sugary drinks and hyperactivity since the 1920s, and have not found any link. Although some studies have suggested a possible association between sugar intake and hyperactivity, most of the evidence comes from unique, individual experiences, often associated with other medical conditions that can't be applied to a larger population. With all the previous efforts and studies, further research is not likely to establish a compelling link between sugar and hyperactive behavior.

One idea that has generated some debate is that certain colorings used in food and beverages may be linked to hyperactivity in children. This, too, is an old theory that has been tested in a number of clinical trials and been disproven. A review of published scientific information does not support that connection.

Of course, as with all foods and beverages given to children, moderation and balance is important.

Neither HFCS in carbonated soft drinks nor any other single food or beverage is responsible for the problems of overweight, obesity or diabetes. Extra weight is gained when you take in more calories than your body burns, no matter where those calories come from. Extensive reviews of scientific evidence from several clinical researchers have found no relationship between carbohydrate intake-including the sugars in carbonated soft drinks-and diabetes.

- Mayne ST. Carbonated soft drink consumption and risk of esophageal adenocarcinoma. Journal National Cancer Institute, 98:72-75, 2006.
- Cuomo F, et al. Effects of carbonated water on functional dyspepsia and constipation. European Journal Gastroenterology Hepatology, 14:991-999, 2002.
- Fass R, et al. Predictors of heartburn during sleep in a large prospective cohort study, CHEST, 127:1658-1666, 2005.



Bust that stress!

The importance of living a healthy and active lifestyle

CHERRY Baluyot, 39, lives and breathes stress as the IT project manager of a local Philippine company. With company clients in Canada, she usually works at night to attend meetings via phone conference. Pretty soon, she realized her health was going downhill.

Like Cherry, the growing workforce in the call center industry, financial services, information technology and sales force are subject daily to high levels of stress. They eat to remove a clamor in their stomach that's not related to hunger. They chain-smoke and drink endless cups of dark coffee. They read books without understanding the text or sit in a movie theater without really watching. They turn to anything to ease the stress creeping along their spines.

But Cherry found out that the best way to be healthy and live well is to go back to basics. The cure for stress was, and still is, to live a balanced, healthy and active lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, getting regular physical activity and proper hydration.

More Filipinos are embracing the same route: eating more greens and munching on five kinds of fruits everyday even if it means they do it on the fly. They make sure they have water and different beverages that can be easily grabbed as they go to a meeting. At home and in school, snacks are made from fruits, good cereals and different hydrating beverages. They make time to do any kind of physical activity at least an hour a day. They start the day by eating healthy breakfast and end it with a walk, a quick dance session at the gym or a few minutes on the treadmill. Proofs of the growing concern about healthy living are the many wellness and fitness centers that have sprouted all over the country in recent years.

And it's about time. The Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Department of Science and Technology said Filipinos are not eating well. In 2003, the agency said only 8.2% of Filipino households eat the required 400 grams per day of fruits and vegetables - a drop from 11.5% in 1993. It also said that obesity, even in children, is a growing problem.

The answers to a more balanced, healthy and active lifestyle are in fact simple, but they require Filipinos to watch what they eat and do. Often, the barriers can be solved by a strong mindset and commitment to stay healthy. Here are some tips to overcome common barriers:

No time to exercise

1. Skip the elevator if you can take the stairs and give up that most convenient parking spot so you can walk a little bit more.
2. Get up earlier. Reducing snooze time by 30 minutes so you can have a stretching or running routine early in the morning is well worth the lost zzzzs.
3. Instead of watching movies on weekends, grab your bikes and go to the park. Race with your kids, or dance with your spouse in your living room.

No time to fix a healthy meal

1. Keep meals simple. Healthy family dinners are in fact cooked more easily because vegetables should only be half-cooked.
2. Fruit desserts don't need much fuss. Bananas, mangoes, melons and other fruits are good snacks. Add some whipped cream, cheese squares and they are great refreshments for visitors.
3. Your favorite beverages now come in low-calorie or no calorie versions, but still with the same great taste.

If you have the same stress in your life as Cherry and don't know how to get rid of it, remember this: living a fuller and better life is as easy as getting healthier and more active today.

A Stroke of Health

Some people believe in luck. That's why they line up for hours to join game shows. They wait in front of the TV to catch lottery results. And they can never resist betting some money at a card game once in a while.

People's belief in luck also extends to health. There is this idea that some people are just blessed with good genes that make it hard for them to gain weight or develop diseases. This may or may not be true. Some people may be lucky in health but that certainly doesn't mean that they are the only ones who can be healthy. Everybody can live a balanced, healthy and active lifestyle, whether they are lucky or not.

Take for example Olympian Akiko Thomson. Luck was definitely on her side when she brought glory to the Philippines as a swimmer, but that wasn't the only thing she had going for her. As every athlete knows, being the best entails being in excellent health, a lot of hard work, patience - and it doesn't develop overnight. Even now that her competing days are over, Akiko still makes health her number one priority.

"Health is very important especially because I'm a very active person," shared Akiko. "The thing is you only really appreciate the value of health when it's gone. But there are so many things you can't do if you aren't healthy. I guess I'm very thankful that I started off in a sporting career. So being active is something that my body looks for even if I'm not competing in that level anymore. Also, when you're an athlete, naturally a balanced diet is part of your life."

Like Akiko shared, being healthy doesn't mean you have to be an athlete. It actually just means living out three simple healthy and active lifestyle or HAL values: eating a balanced diet, regular physical activity and proper hydration.

Diets make people cringe because it means either eating only one type of food or abstaining from other types of food. A balanced diet means eating a wide variety of foods to meet your daily caloric and nutritional needs. Different foods give you different things: vitamins, minerals and energy. So you have to eat different types of food to make sure your body gets everything it needs to stay healthy. There are also no 'junk foods' to avoid, only 'junk diets' or bad combinations of food and excessive eating. What's important is to maintain a balance between what you eat and what you burn through physical activity.

Speaking of physical activity, some people seem to think that being fit means having to go to the gym or do sports. That's just not true. Anyone can be physically active, whether they can afford the gym or not, or if they are inclined to sports or not. That's because physical activity can actually mean any activity that can get your body moving, sweating and burning calories. It can mean walking your dog around the park, or playing with your kids in the afternoons. Did you know that household chores are also physical activities? Yes, you can bunot, walis and laba your way to fitness. Just remember to do at least an hour to an hour and a half of physical activities everyday to keep fit.

Akiko certainly is no stranger to physical fitness. But as she shared, swimming is not the only thing keeping her active these days. "Swimming is my staple but I also enjoy running, which I try to do once a week. I like to golf as well. I also like just being outdoors. You don't have to be an expert or whatever, as long as you're just moving. My mom does a lot of work in the garden and that's good stuff. Eventually my goal is to get back into the gym and start light weight training. It's because I recognize that as you get older, caring for your bones is very important, especially for women. So that's one way of building your muscles to support your bones."

Being the great swimmer that she is, she knows how beneficial it is for ones' health and life in general. "I always tell people that it is a wonderful investment because it's one of the sports that you can do even when you're old. The good thing about swimming is that there's very minimal injury because it's a non-contact sport. And since you're in the water, it doesn't matter if you're big because you're buoyant, so it's not so hard. Another good thing is that you're using your whole body so it's not just working your legs, and it's also good for the lungs."

"Not only that, it's a vital skill to learn. Because you never know when you will need to swim," added Akiko. "Something that people don't realize is that 16 children in the Philippines drown a day. That's something that the swimming association is trying to address. How do you address that? What we're trying to do is help people to have a very comfortable, friendly relationship with the water because that's the only time that they will enjoy. And then from there you can develop the skills. It's a life skill and a life sport."

Another HAL value that people tend to forget is hydration. It's a shame because it's one of the most important aspects of health. According to the Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness (BIHW) website, "If you don't get all the fluids you need, you may start to feel dizzy, get a headache or develop muscle cramps. Even mild dehydration can affect physical and mental performance, while severe dehydration can be life-threatening (www.thebeverageinstitute.org. 2006)."

If people do remember to hydrate, they still follow the eight-glasses-of-water-a-day rule. Actually the BIHW website says your body needs 11-16 cups of total fluids a day, depending on age, weight, gender, the weather and level of physical activity. Fluids also mean all beverages that contain water can hydrate. So you can drink your favorite soft drinks, teas and juices. Food with water like fruits, vegetables, soups and stews can help too.

Another myth about hydration is that only athletes need to do it. Think again. Everybody needs to hydrate because your body uses fluids in everyday functions like walking too. Akiko agrees, "Drinking is just really important. It's healthy to perspire. If you're drinking and perspiring that's healthy. You don't have to run marathons to hydrate yourself. I personally normally have a water bottle in my car just to sip whenever. It's something that I do unconsciously."

Hydration really is important, even swimmers need it too! "A lot of people just assume "Oh you're in the water anyway,"" explained Akiko. "But you sweat in the water too. All athletes have a water bottle, they just need it."

"I just really encourage people to make health a part of their lifestyle," she added. "You have to start now while you still have your health. Because you don't want to wait until you lose it and can't gain it back. It's very important to be preventive. I know that if you're not an athlete, initially it's very hard to push yourself to be active. But you know you do that in the beginning and it becomes something that your body looks for."

For more information about your health and beverages, visit the Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness website at www.thebeverageinstitute.org. Live a balanced, healthy and active lifestyle today!

Shot on location at Cantinetta, G/F Karrivin Plaza A, 2316 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City (892-9873). Special thanks to Ivan Maminta, General Manager.

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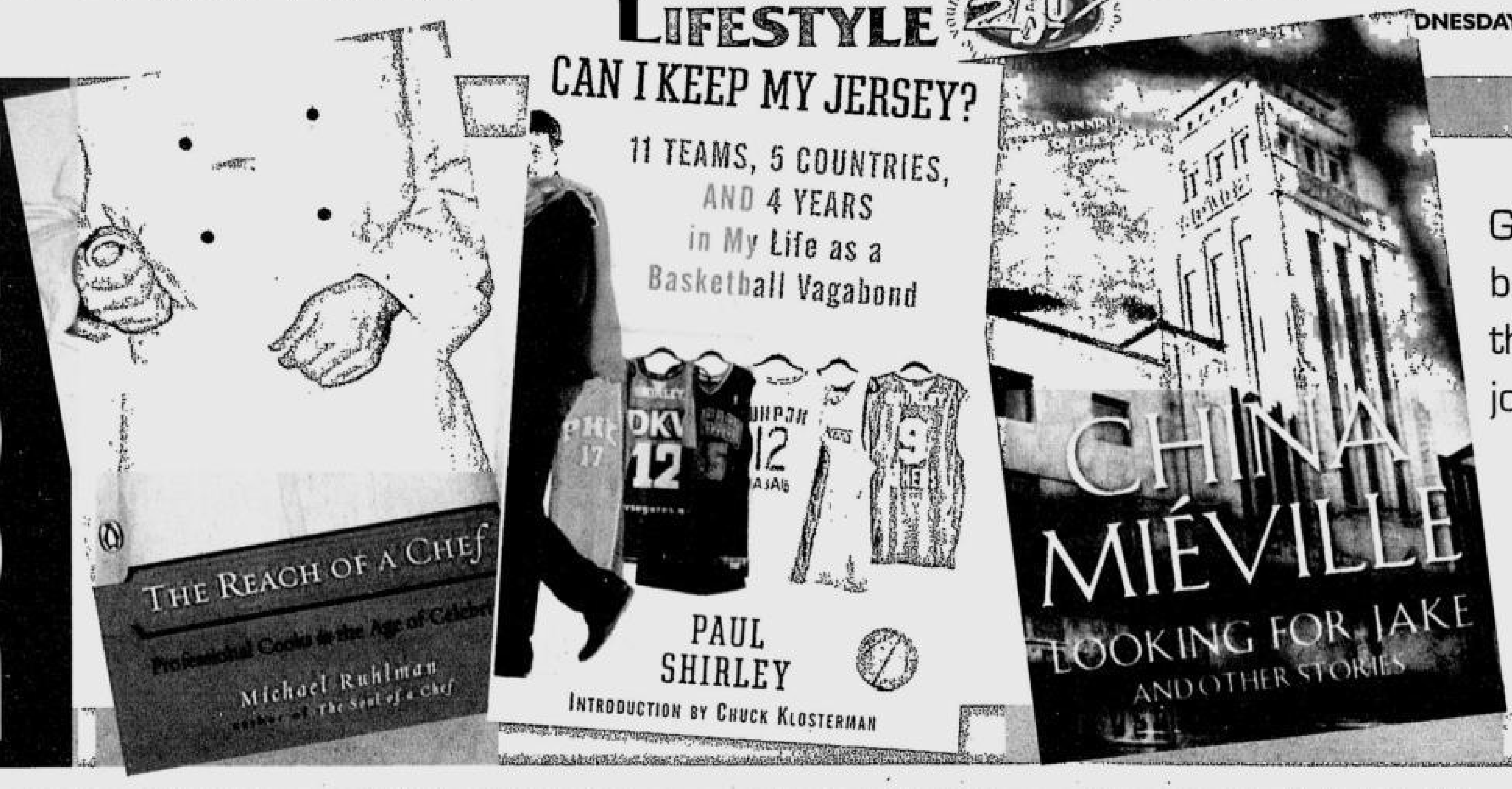
Book it


THE REACH OF A CHEF
Professional Cooks in the Age of Celebri
Michael Ruhlman
author of The Soul of a Chef
CAN I KEEP MY JERSEY?
11 TEAMS, 5 COUNTRIES, AND 4 YEARS in My Life as a Basketball Vagabond
PAUL SHIRLEY
INTRODUCTION BY CHUCK KLOSTERMAN
CHINA MIÉVILLE
LOOKING FOR JAKE
AND OTHER STORIES

Give a bestseller that is a joy to read

By Adrian M. Dy
2bU! Correspondent

THE BRITISH PHILOSOPHER Bertrand Russell once said that there were two motives for reading a book: "One, that you enjoy it; the other, that you can boast about it." Perhaps the same is true for giving someone a book.

On one hand, you may have loved the book to bits and you want to share it with someone else. On the other, you may just want to be known as the guy who gives out New York Times bestsellers. And while there's nothing wrong with reading what everyone else is reading, there is depth to a bookstore beyond the "Bestsellers" section and the enjoyment the receiver of your gift will get is bound to be greater than if you go out and get him or her this year's "Da Vinci Code."

'Read the Book Before the Movie!'

Obvious Pick: "The Golden Compass" by Philip Pullman, "I Am Legend" by Richard Matheson

My Pick: "Jumper" by Steven Gould

While everyone is imagining Nicole Kidman with polar bears or Will Smith and vampires, the hypothetical recipient of this gift could be reading the story of Davey, a boy who discovers that he has the gift of teleportation, and what he does with his powers (starts out selfish, and then works his way up to averting terrorist attacks). The book is set to become a movie next year, starring the "Star Wars" prequels duo of Hayden Christensen and Samuel L. Jackson. So if you know a friend who wants to get the jump on the Hollywood production, this is the book.

'Short Stories Because I'm on the Go!'

Obvious Pick: "Fragile Things" by Neil Gaiman

My Pick: "Looking for Jake and Other Stories" by China Mieville

When even Neil Gaiman praises your work, you know you have it made. Mieville's novels are sweeping epics, with enough possible plots to spin out into an entire library of lesser novels, but he is at his tightest and his best with this collection of shorts. Mieville finds the terrifying in the most unusual places, a collection of letters about streets that move from place to place, a children's playground, mirrors, and more. The highest compliment I can pay him is that he reminds me best of a modern H.P. Lovecraft, without the excessively flowery prose. The only problem? The title story that kicks off the collection is the weakest and most ambiguous of the bunch.

'I'm Hungry, I'll Pick up a Book'

Obvious Pick: "No Reservations" by Anthony Bourdain

My Pick: "The Reach of a Chef" by Michael Ruhlman

It may seem like a heavy concept: a book that tackles the socio-cultural impact of celebrity chefs, but this literary eight-course meal doesn't weigh you down when you're finished. It may in fact, cause you to turn back to the first page and go for seconds. Ruhlman navigates the restaurants and television sets of the heavy hitters like Rachel Ray and Thomas Keller and the smaller, humbler, but equally tasty organic markets and bistros of Melissa Kelly and Masayoshi Takayama with ease and aplomb, putting into words our new-found fascination with not just what's for dinner, but who's cooking it as well. And the best measure of success? You will be hungry after reading this book. You've been warned.

'Halftime? Time for a Chapter or Two'

Obvious Pick: "The Last Season" by Phil Jackson

My Pick: "Can I Keep My Jersey?" by Paul Shirley

Not every sports book needs to be about the big name Nike endorsers. Paul Shirley's self-deprecating tale of his career is hilarious and insightful. If you think a baller's career begins with the NBA Draft and ends with a jersey-retiring

BOOK/ D3

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Double Your Luck!
"MARITES ALLEN'S FENG SHUI WAYS TO WIN-Part 2"
WORLD OF FENG SHUI
TRIVIA:4 Which slot was given by the Jade Emperor to the powerful looking Dragon?
ANS: a)Fifth b)Sixth c)Seventh d)Eighth
To join, SMART and GLOBE/SUN subscribers simply have to submit a one – time registration by keying in THESS REG <name/address/age/gender> (Ex. THESS REG Bona 8y/Gold St. Marikina City/37/F) and send it to 2881. To answer,Send THESS <letter> to 2881
Yesterday's answer d)The Horse
[illegible] on January 1? 2008
"Marites Allen Philippines 2008 Feng Shui Extravaganza [illegible] YEAR OF THE EARTH RA"
Watch out every FRIDAY at INQUIRER for the announcement of the weekly "Thess Allen Feng Shui Ways to Win 2" Promo runs from December 2, 2007 to January 7, 2008
Per DTI-NCR series no. 4283 of 2007. Promo Period: Dec. 3, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008

Walk the talk in style

The new W580i Walkman phone packs a lot despite the deceptively slim form

SONY ERICSSON HAS JUST released the new W580i Walkman phone, a slim slider phone that speaks volumes in urban cool while delivering the full-on Walkman phone music experience. It can store up to 470 full-length tracks, has a 2.0-megapixel camera tucked within the slider, plus stacks of gaming, fun sports and entertainment features.

"The W580i Walkman phone is designed to match your lifestyle, whether you are in the car, at a party or busy at the gym," says Steve Walker, head of product marketing at Sony Ericsson. "As well as letting you have your latest music with you at all times, the W580i steps in as your portable photo album and pocket gaming device. It will even serve as your training partner thanks to built-in sports applications that track running speed and distance."

The latest Walkman phone pushes the boundaries of urban style. When the slider is closed, the design, either in style white or urban gray, is ice-cool, understated. Flick open the slider and the phone becomes a real attention grabber, revealing hot orange color accents and stunning light effects along the sides.

At only 14-mm thin, the W580i finds room for music, the camera and the fun applications. As well as storing up to 470 full-length music tracks, it is incredibly easy to get music from your computer into the phone, since the Disc2Phone music management software and USB cable all come in the box. You can even use TrackID™ to identify music tracks you don't recognize, regardless of whether they are playing out loud or via the phone's RDS FM Radio. With all this going on, make sure you take time to notice the light effects on the W580i.

With the W580i Walkman phone, you can even take your favorite tracks. It will count your steps, your calories and monitor your running speed/distance/time. Add to that your best tunes for motivation and whether you're on a run, in the gym or just out for a stroll, the W580i is the perfect fitness partner.

The 2.0-megapixel camera and fast connectivity make picture blogging and instant messaging second nature. 3D Gaming is fast action, too, with hit titles preloaded. The slider action also allows for a large 2-inch color screen, ideal not just for gaming but also web browsing and viewing your camera photos.

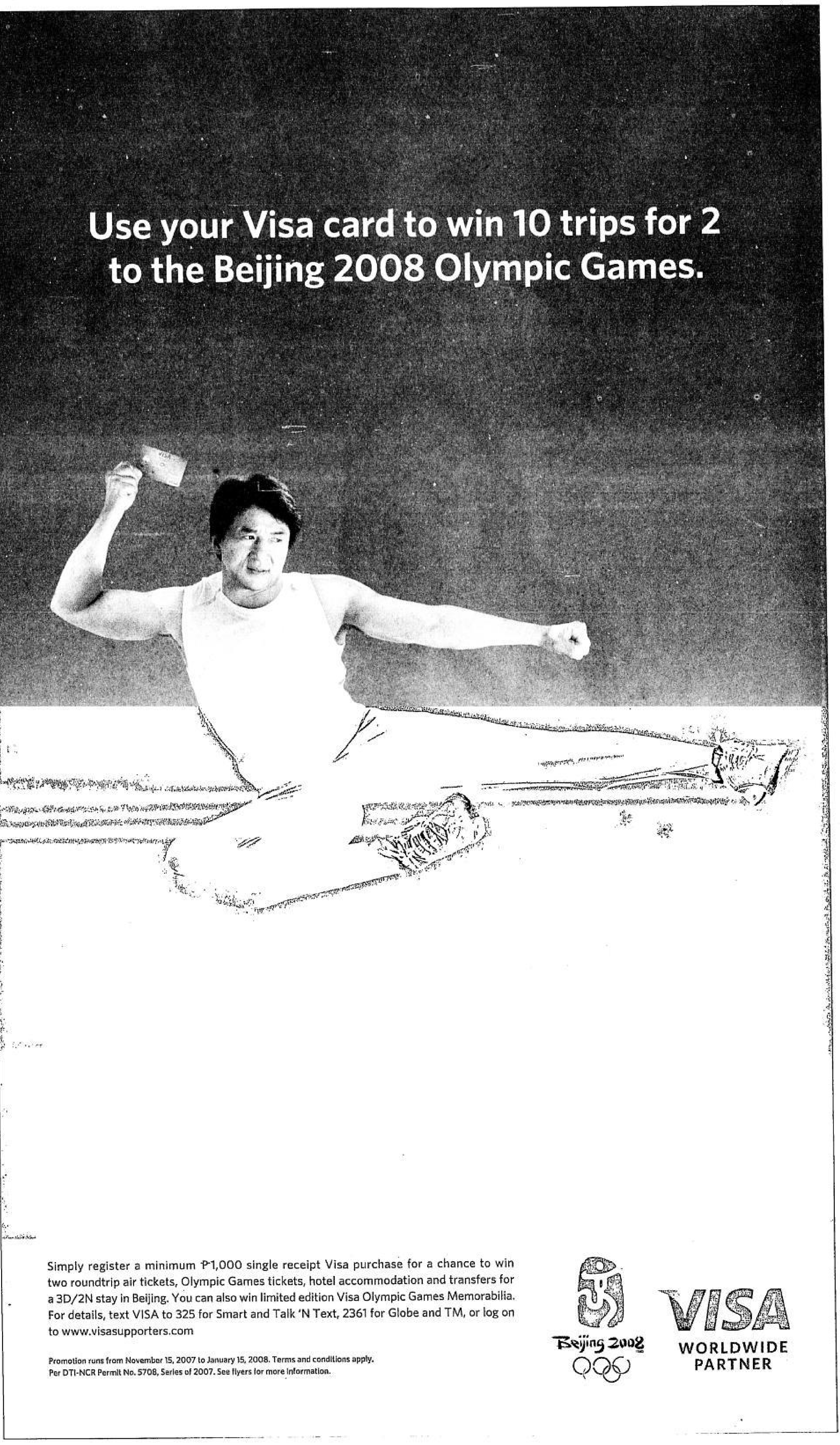
You can also add music accessories to your Walkman phone. Two sets of optional speakers—the Portable Speakers MPS-70 and Snap-on Speakers MPS-75—instantly transform the W580i into the heart and soul of any party.

If you want to turn up the volume still further, then the Bluetooth™ Music Receiver MBR-100 lets you play your phone music directly through a home stereo, using your W580i as the remote control to skip through tracks and adjust the volume. So the W580i Walkman phone looks and sounds stylish, whether you are in a party or just hitting the street.

Sony Ericsson Walkman promo with 2bU!

SONY ERICSSON WALKMAN phones give you your music, your way. These mobile phones get you into the groove for anything in life. So tell us, what do you listen to when you're getting ready for a big date? What's playing when the clock is ticking and your hair is getting done or your outfit needs ironing?

Send your answer to sonyericsson2bu@gmail.com with your name, age and contact info plus the song title, artist and music genre. Deadline for this answer is on Friday, Dec. 7. Give us your best I'll-be-down-in-a-minute music and you'll win the Sony Ericsson W580i Walkman phone with Shake control. The unique Shake control feature lets you skip from track to track on your play list simply by pressing your phone's Walkman button and by flicking your wrist. Enjoy up to 470 songs or listen to the FM Radio, all while keeping fit with the phone's built-in steo counter and other fitness applications. The W580i also comes with a 2-megapixel camera with digital zoom, 3D gaming, and fast Net downloads and browsing.



Use your Visa card to win 10 trips for 2 to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Simply register a minimum ₱1,000 single receipt Visa purchase for a chance to win two roundtrip air tickets, Olympic Games tickets, hotel accommodation and transfers for a 3D/2N stay in Beijing. You can also win limited edition Visa Olympic Games Memorabilia. For details, text VISA to 325 for Smart and Talk 'N Text, 2361 for Globe and TM, or log on to www.visasupporters.com

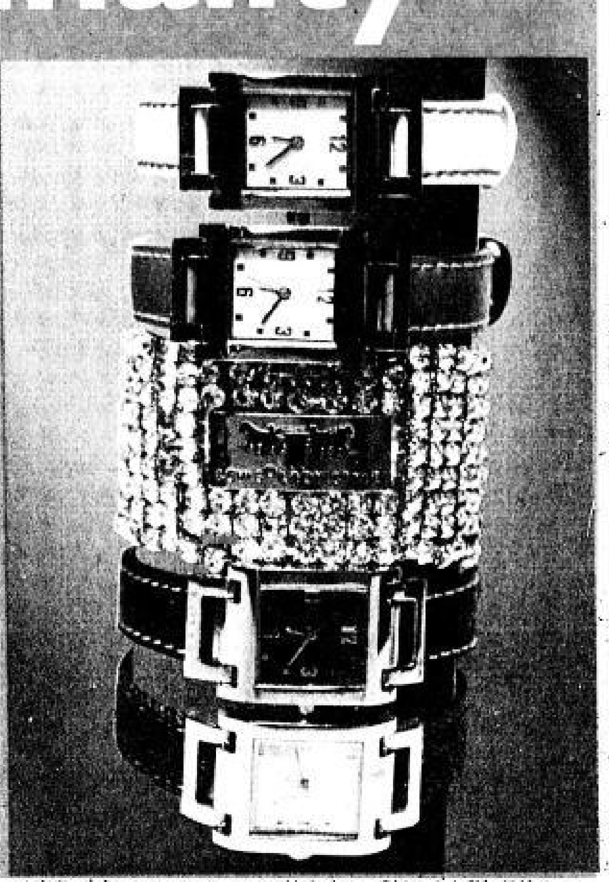
Promotion runs from November 15, 2007 to January 15, 2008. Terms and conditions apply.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5708, Series of 2007. See flyers for more information.

Beijing 2008
VISA WORLDWIDE PARTNER

The look of originality

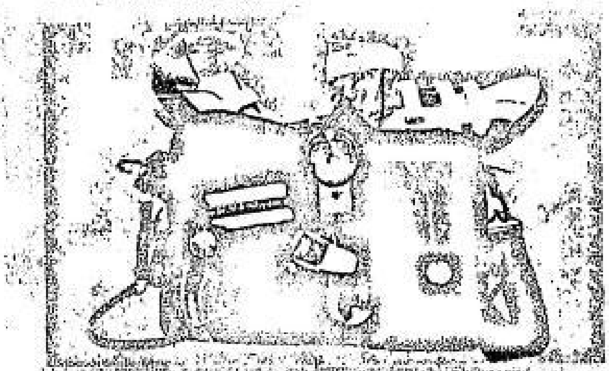
GIRL [illegible] Levi's pink logo canvas [illegible] trucker hat, Levi's Lady Style crystal-studded [illegible] with cusp buckle, Levi's pink leather watch, Levi [illegible]

PAIR your Levi's tee with the new line of accessories [illegible] Levi's [illegible] digital watch.



LEVI'S ladies' watches include a collection of slim [illegible]

FOR A MORE cosmopolitan [illegible]



THE LEVI'S guy can complete his 100-percent [illegible]

LEVI'S PRESENTS ITS LATEST COLLECTION OF ACCESSORIES TO HELP you complete your signature Levi's look. The array of accessories includes jewelry, watches, hats, bags, belts, small leather goods, wallets, socks, shoes, bodywear and eyewear. With the accessories, Levi's makes it easy for you to stay 100-percent original.

For daywear, ladies may pair the basic Levi's jeans and white top of their boyfriends with various accessories such as white belt with a cusp metal buckle, Levi's Black Star bangle and pink canvas bag.

Want to give a mod feel to your jeans? Contrast your Levi's black or indigo jeans with a cream belt with geometric silver buckle, or add a shot of color with a bright cherry-red leather slim watch and some Levi's square-rimmed shades in turquoise shell finish.

For the season must-have of tunic-style tops, you can accessorize by cinching it at the waist with a Levi's extra-wide all-leather belt and Levi's canvas bag with double-breasted pockets in olive green.

For guys, get the laid-back look with utilitarian styles that marry form and function. Pair your Levi's Red Loop jeans with leather pieces that kick up your style factor like a Levi's black belt and chunky watch. Top off your outfit with a Levi's messenger bag and don great canvas sneakers from the Levi's footwear collection. You may also put on Levi's eyewear, the perfect getup to catch any lady's eye.

Add rock-star style to the classic Levi's jeans and T-shirt combination with a Levi's logo leather cuff in a burnt shade of brown or a braided leather piece with metallic bead accents matched with a distressed leather belt and a Levi's cap. The layered cool look can be achieved by donning a sleeveless shirt from the Levi's bodywear line under a Levi's button-down shirt.

For evening wear, the ladies can dress up Levi's denims with an all-out gilded look. Pair deep denims with a dramatic top in neutral tones with shiny pieces like a Levi's braided metallic star cuff and a long, gold necklace with interlocked loop details.

Also be inspired by the disco era by putting on the Levi's sequined choker, crystal-studded logo cuff and black knit scarf.

Accent yourself with the newest from Levi's

A FABULOUS OUTFIT IS NEVER COMPLETE WITHOUT ACCESSORIES. Levi's has released exciting accessories for men and women to complement their Levi's jeans look.

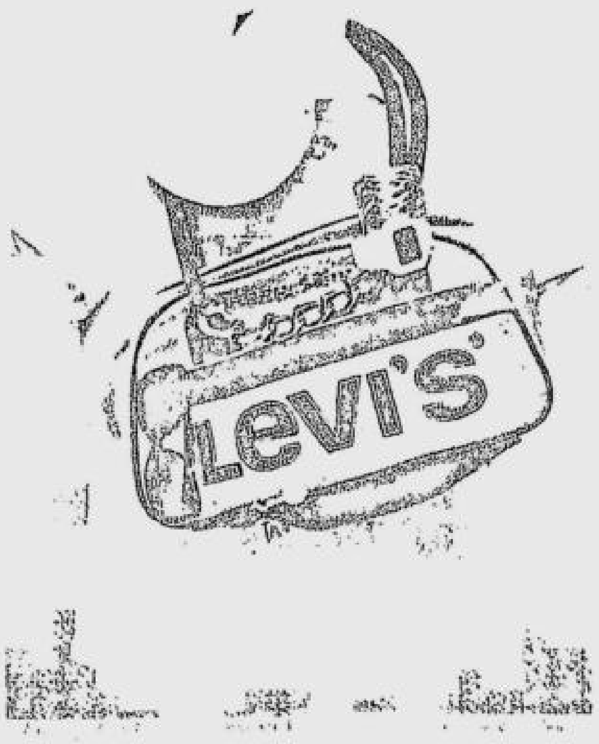
The Levi's accessories are specifically designed to reflect the themes of the various Levi's sub-brands and collections. The accessories are eye-catching, trendy and flaunt-worthy, giving the wearer the 100-percent original Levi's look from head to toe.

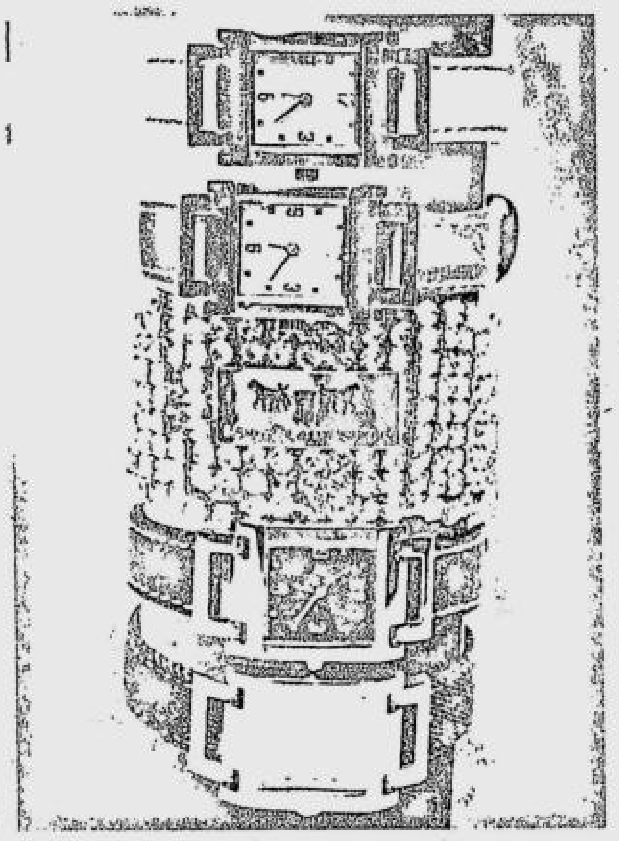
"The newest line of Levi's accessories exemplifies the brand's way of adapting to evolving market," Levi's brand leader Ronnie Celestial said. "Our customers are craving for more in terms of brand experience. This is just one of the many initiatives Levi's has been taking to cater to the market more efficiently."

The new accessories are sure to enhance Levi's 501 jeans, the foremost line of the denim giant. Through jewelry, watches, hats, bags, belts, small leather goods, wallets, socks, shoes, bodywear and eyewear, the Levi's look even becomes more iconic.

LEVI'S has a wide array of accessories that makes it easy for you to stay 100-percent original! The Levi's accessories include belts, bags, jewelry, watches, wallets, small leather goods, shoes, socks, bodywear, headgear and eyewear!

The look of originality





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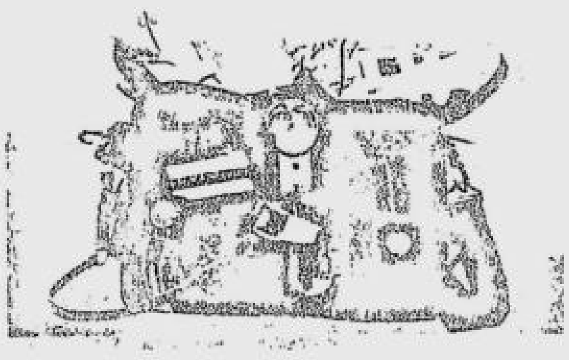

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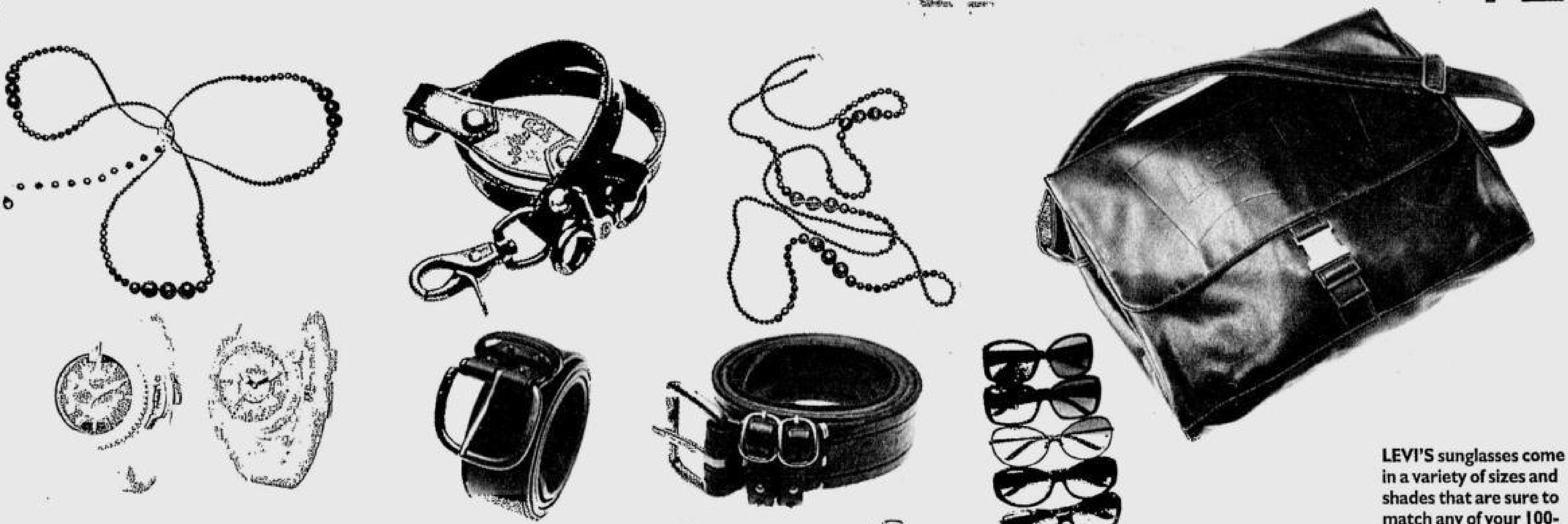
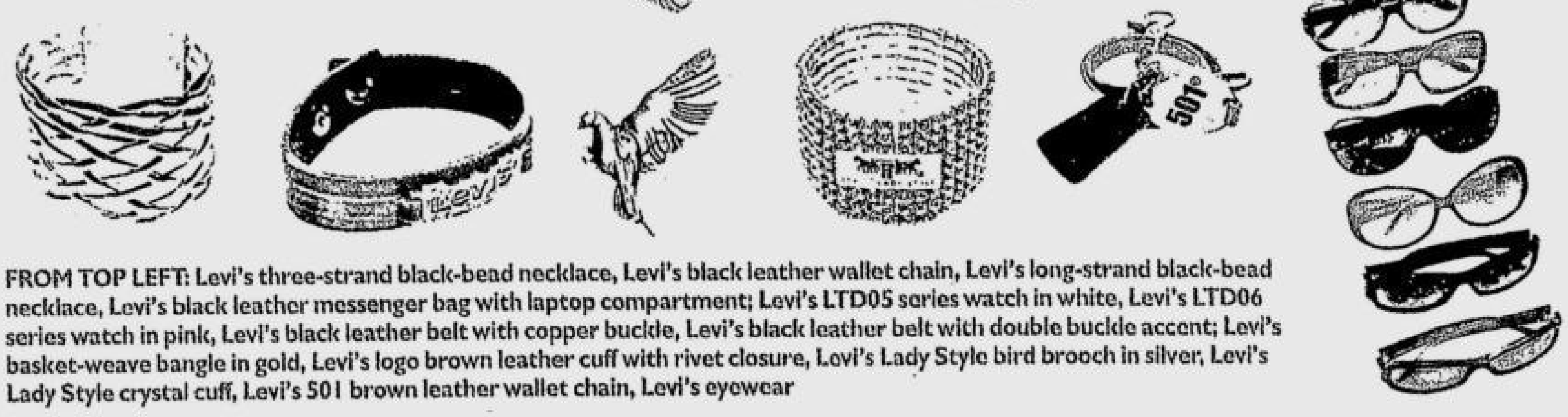
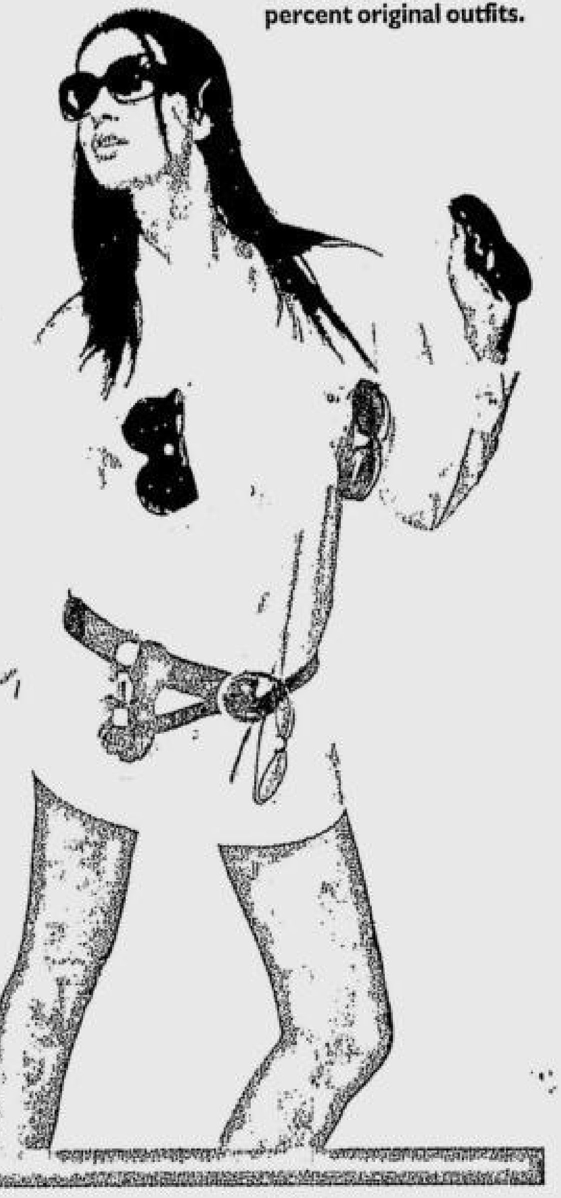
RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

Style musts for the holidays

FROM TOP LEFT: Levi's three-strand black-bead necklace, Levi's black leather wallet chain, Levi's long-strand black-bead necklace, Levi's black leather messenger bag with laptop compartment; Levi's LTD05 series watch in white, Levi's LTD06 series watch in pink, Levi's black leather belt with copper buckle, Levi's black leather belt with double buckle accent; Levi's basket-weave bangle in gold, Levi's logo brown leather cuff with rivet closure, Levi's Lady Style bird brooch in silver, Levi's Lady Style crystal cuff, Levi's 501 brown leather wallet chain, Levi's eyewear



LEVI'S sunglasses come in a variety of sizes and shades that are sure to match any of your 100-percent original outfits.

ICONIC BRAND LEVI'S HAS UNVEILED AN EXCITING assortment of accessories such as belts, bags, jewelry, watches and headgear.

Designs of the Levi's belts for both men and women are unlimited. Women may pair their jeans with the belts that come in an array of colors such as beige, brown, black, red, white and cream. The belts are finished off with different buckles and clasp to go with any outfit. There are rounded metal buckles as well as skinny ones in a dramatic shade of espresso or metallic bronze accents with a whimsical anchor detail. There's also a standout buckle featuring an art deco design.

Guys may pair their jeans with leather pieces that come in rich shades of chocolate or taupe and featuring a matte bronze buckle. Also available is the classic black belt with white stitching detail.

Women can complete their Levi's look with Levi's jewelry such as chunky silver bangles and studded cuffs. Other bangles have studs or stars. Other jewelry are dressy multi-strand beaded necklaces and intricate brooches.

The men may try the worn leather look and copper accents. They can accessorize with the Levi's logo leather cuff in a burnt shade of brown, braided leather bracelets with copper rings, leather wristbands with silver plates, wallet chains and necklaces.

Levi's also offers trendy timepieces that are both functional and stylish. Apart from the chunky leather pieces for men and the small dainty leather pieces for women, the must-have watches from Levi's includes a new line of digital watches available in a palette of colors, from vibrant red, yellow, orange, pink, green and red to the classier white and gray.

The Levi's hats are a perfect accent to cap off an original getup. Available are the Yuletide season-perfect herringbone driving and wool riding caps for men and knit visors for women. Also for women are the colorful trucker caps, together with the plaid equestrian, patent hipster, plaid bucket and suede Charlie hats.

Have a picture-perfect Christmas!

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

AFTER ALL THE CANVASSING FOR THE camera of choice, your friends and relatives may have suddenly changed their profile-pictures with self-portraits by holding up their prized DSLRs in front of themselves.

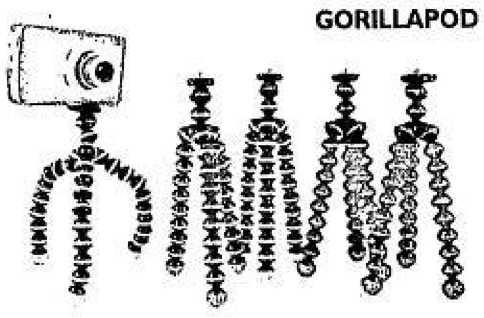
Yes, more and more have been bitten by the photography bug thanks to new camera models that are inexpensive and packed with nifty features. So here are some gift ideas that will surely make opening of the gifts a picture-perfect moment for your shutterbug friend or relative.

Gorillapod

Light and versatile tripod perfect for travel and landscape photographers who love to pack light.

Original Gorillapod (compact digital cameras); P1,350

Gorillapod SLR (SLR type cameras and camcorders); P2,250



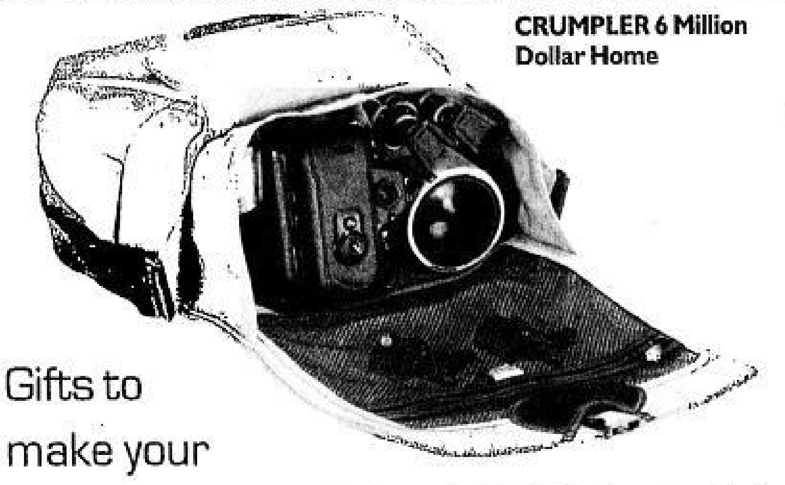
GORILLAPOD

Gorillapod SLR-ZOOM (tripod mountable cameras and professional tripod heads); P2,750

Velbon Sherpa 600r. Light and versatile tripod with removable sliding center column and three leg angles for picture perfect stability; P4,400

Tamrac MXS5369 Memory and Battery Management Wallet 8. Keep the most important items of a digital photographer organized; P600

> Gifts to make your shutterbug shoot like there's no tomorrow



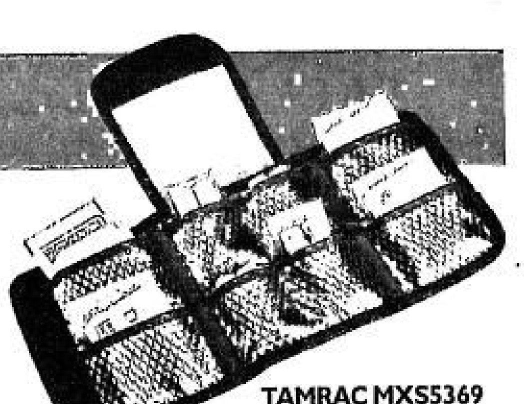
CRUMPLER 6 Million Dollar Home

Digital Survival Kit (For lens cleaning); P1,100

Photo Studio in a Box (For product shots); P4,200

Lensbaby 3G (Selective focusing); P13,750

All accessories available at JT Photoworld. Call 4093668, 5366590 to 91, 8972561 or visit http://www.jtphotoworld.com, http://digitalprinting.multiply.com/



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Visit the Crumpler Store at Bonifacio High Street and 3/L, TriNoma mall.

Website: http://www.crumpler.com.au/

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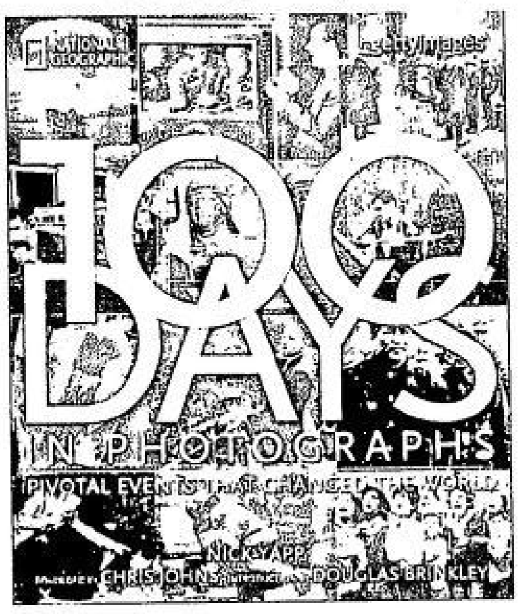
Call 6402525, 0917-8242525, 0920-9002525 or visit http://viewty.lgmobile.com

LG Viewty Phone (LG-KU990)



Books

"National Geographic 100 Days in Photographs: Pivotal Events that Changed the World," by Nick Yapp; P1,359

"Complete Photography Manual: Everything You Need to Know about Photography, Both Digital and Film"; P1,605

Digital Photographer Philippines magazine (for enthusiasts and pros); P295 per issue; P2,500 for one-year subscription in Metro Manila, P3,000 for provincial areas.

For subscription, download online subscription form at www.digitalphotographer.com.ph or call 8124612.

Photographer

Books available in Powerbooks (www.powerbooks.com.ph) subject to price change and availability.

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Tel.: 8254258

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E-mail tammydavid@gmail.com

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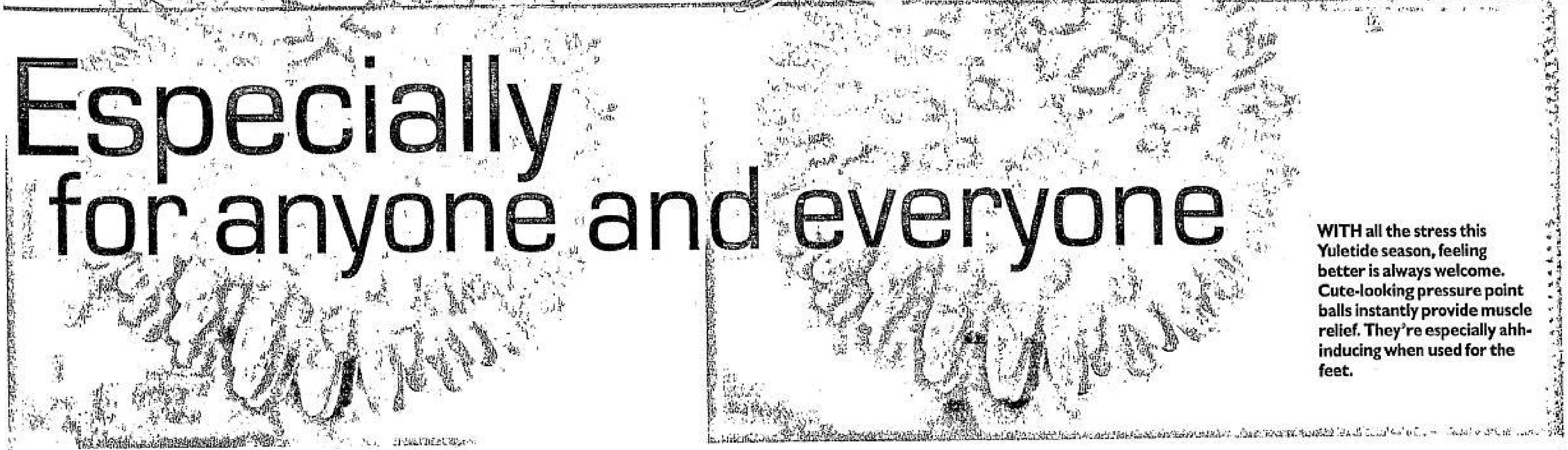


Especially for anyone and everyone

WITH all the stress this Yuletide season, feeling better is always welcome. Cute-looking pressure point balls instantly provide muscle relief. They're especially ahh-inducing when used for the feet.

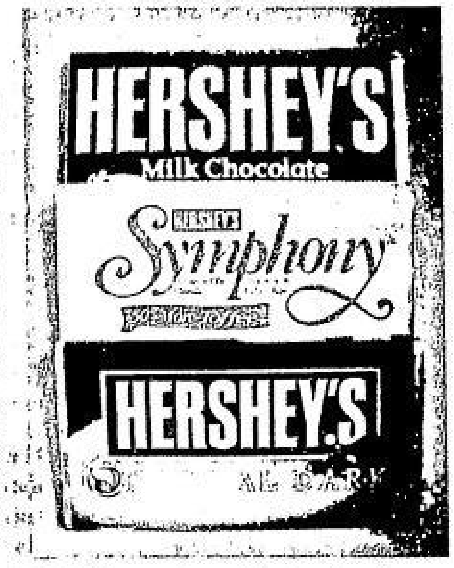
Giving likable gifts can be a no-brainer... Just use your brains

Text and photos
by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

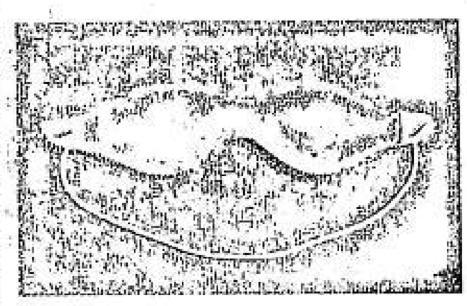
DON'T YOU JUST HATE it when unexpected relatives show up during Christmas get-togethers and you end up looking like the bad guy because you have gifts for everyone except for the surprise arrivals? How about the night before the office or class party, when you realize that you completely forgot about a couple of special people—a must-please superior or a very friendly security guard—and now you have to either recycle a lousy gift for them or not give them anything at all?

ESPECIALLY/F2

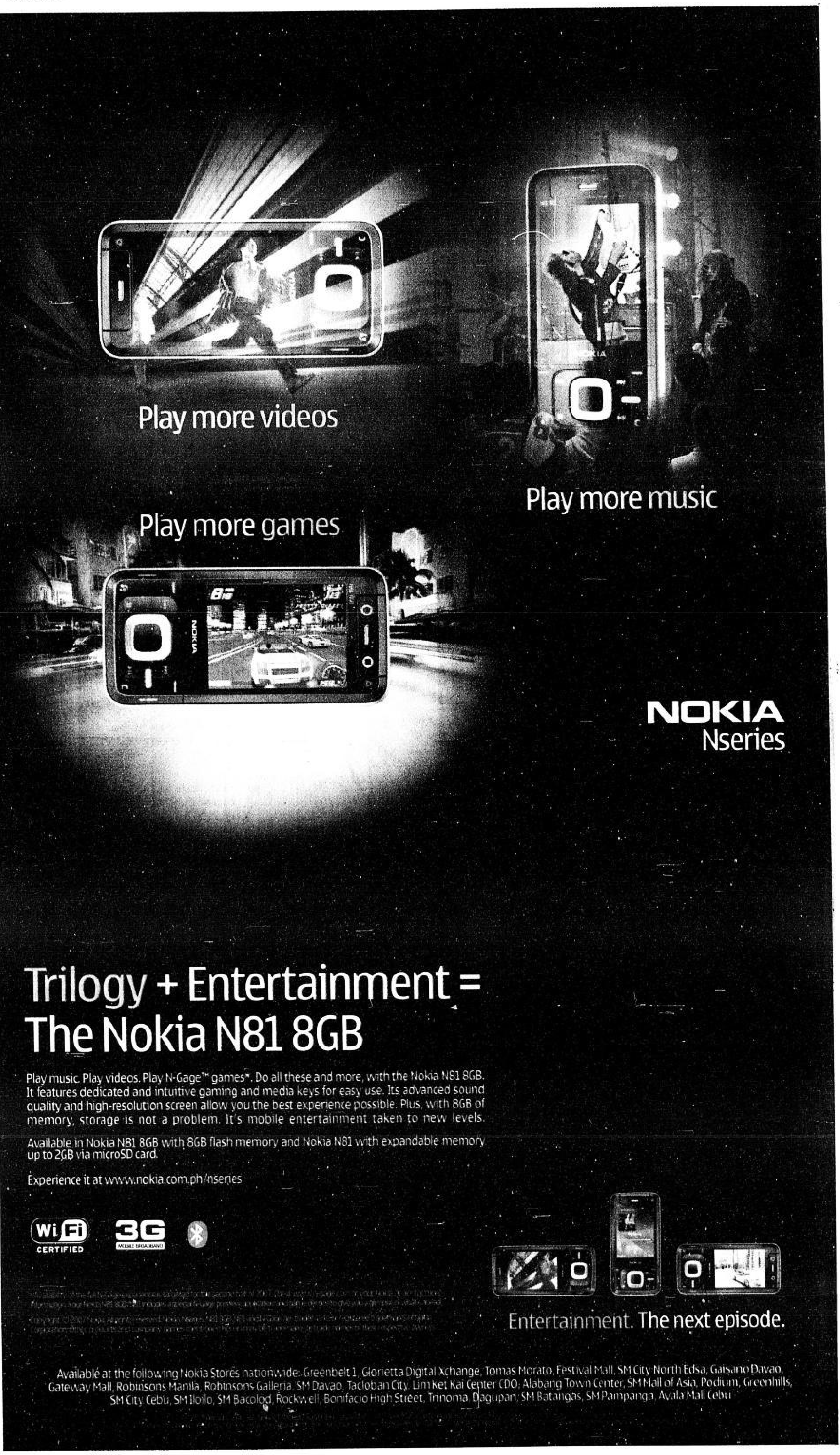
ESPECIALLY during this cold and windy season, a stick of lip balm is a must. The best thing about it is that as long as it's not tinted, even guys can appreciate and use it.



STOCK up on large blocks of various kinds of chocolates, stack them up and tie them with a ribbon and you're ready with a sweet present.



SOOTHE and cool or relax and unwind with The Body Shop's eye mask (P250).



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Christmas get-together ideas

By Gmeleen Faye B. Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

CHRISTMAS IS A PERFECT occasion for getting together, so why not throw a Christmas party? Here's a short 2bU! guide for throwing that perfect bash.

First things first, by the time you read this, everyone's December calendar might be cramped already. Even before you plan the food or the décor, call or text everyone to save the date. Avoid scheduling your party on a Friday. Traffic is always horrible on this night, and you don't want your guests arriving in a foul mood. Instead, try holding it on a Sunday night, or even in between Christmas and New Year, when traffic will be light and everyone will be relatively rested.

Next, prepare the invitations. It will be your guest's first impression of what your party will be like, so build the excitement by sending out invitations.

If you're hosting a party for only one set of friends, use a photo of your group as the front of the invitation. If you're inviting people from different peer groups, introduce them to each other. Instead of herding each new arrival around the room to introduce him to the others, just announce his name when he enters, say a little anecdote about him, and give him a Santa hat with his name on it. The hats can also double as party favors.

Third, plan the menu. Prepare appetizers and desserts a week in advance. Opt for heavy finger foods that do not require guests to sit down. That way, they can just stand around and mingle, and need not confine themselves to one table all night.

But don't focus your energy solely on the food and invitations. To make your party less predictable, try having a theme.

Pre-party shindig

Plan to go as a group to a holiday concert or to Star City's snow park. Ask everyone to meet up at your house around three hours before the start of the show, and ask each guest to bring one course, like salad or dessert. You need not even decorate your house, because they'll all be too busy getting psyched up for the event.

Trim the tree

If you don't have time to decorate your Christmas tree, simply ask your guests to bring ornaments to hang on your tree. Better yet, prepare art materials like colored cardboard, yarn, cotton balls, Styrofoam balls, glitter, and glue guns so your guests can make their own. Borrow or buy books on Christmas decorations so your friends can get some ideas. Even if the decorations turn out to be pretty ugly, you can always host another Trim-the-Tree party, this time for a more artistic set of friends.

Winter wonderland

We don't have snow in the country, but you can still have a White Christmas. Buy a white Christmas tree, decorate everything in white or silver, and ask guests to come in white. Have ice sculptures as table centerpieces. Serve milk and white frosted cookies.

Shopping day-out

All will be busy doing their Christmas shopping and wrapping gifts. Why not combine these otherwise stressful activities with some quality time with friends? Gather everyone at a restaurant for lunch, then go to some out-of-the-way place to shop for clothes and gift items, such as Dapitan and Bangkal. Stop by a bookstore for gift wrappers, ribbons and tags. Compare purchases and help each other out with the wrapping.

Do-gooder party

Ask your friends to bring canned food, toys or books. Buy baskets and ribbons and put together gift baskets you can bring to an orphanage. You can also buy ingredients to make cookies or cakes, so you and your friends can bake them together. Donate these to a shelter. Better yet, schedule a day to volunteer at a local charity.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

If meeting up for dinner has become de rigueur, why not throw a Christmas party?

Neighborhood run-around

If you and your friends live in the same subdivision, organize a house-to-house feast. Each person will serve one course at his house—appetizer, salad, entrée and dessert. Ask everyone to bring his or her own glass to dinner. Make sure though that you all live near each other, or you'll end up in traffic half of the time.

After-school/work fun

This is ideal on weekday nights. Tell friends to drop by your house after school or work. Prepare some wine, cheese, soup and pinwheel sandwiches. The good thing about this is that everyone will be too tired from school or work to stay too long, but you still have enough time to catch up with each other.

Dessert bar

If everyone is really too busy, just offer dessert. Bake or buy cakes, cupcakes or ice cream. Invite people to drop by late at night after their Christmas dinners or parties. You can cut down on costs too since you just need to buy desserts.

No matter which theme your party takes though, don't get too stressed up over the details. Enjoy yourself as much as you can, because your guests won't have fun if they see you getting all worked up. After all, your party should also be for you, not just for them. And before they leave, ask for their comments and suggestions, so it will be even easier for you to plan your party for next year.

Especially for anyone and everyone

From page F1

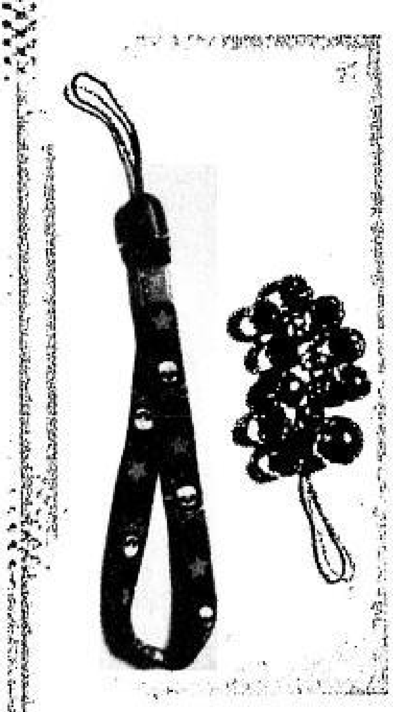
Let's face it: gift-giving especially during the Yuletide can be an obligation sometimes. However, you are not obligated to be stressed out.

While a specific personalized, custom-made and well-thought-out present picked especially for someone ensures appreciation (provided you're good at getting hints or you really know the person very well), a general gift won't hurt. The secret is to pick something that you yourself would love to receive regardless of your hobbies, work or interests.

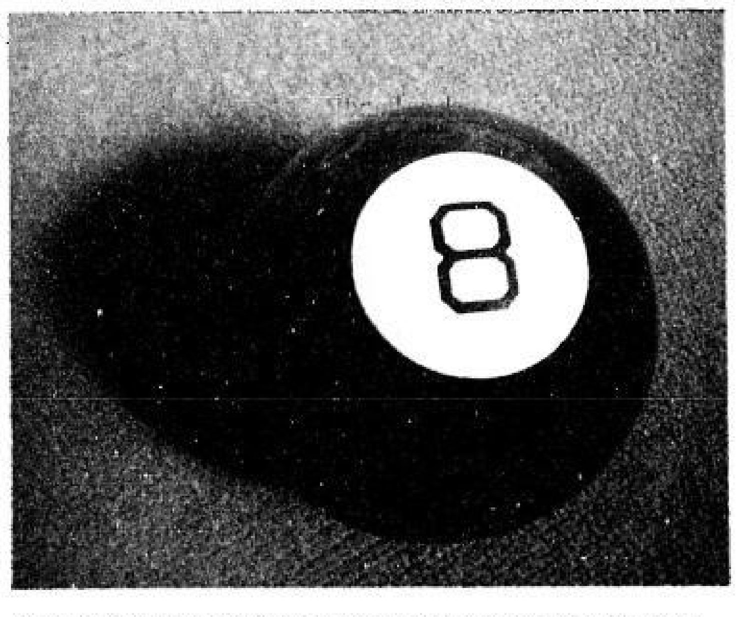
They say that when it comes to gift-giving, it's the thought that counts. The items below prove that giving likable gifts can be a no-brainer. Stock up on these gift suggestions, prepare those Christmas paper bags and you're all set to spread the spirit with the following emergency presents.

Don't be afraid to mix, match and multiply since it is the season of generosity, after all. A tip is to stay away from those gift sets abundant in malls because not only do they reflect how lazy and thoughtless you are in gift-picking, it's also so easy for your recipients to check the price tags! Oh, and stay away from those mugs and picture frames too. In case you don't know, these items are not a big hit with most people and they often end up as recycled gifts.

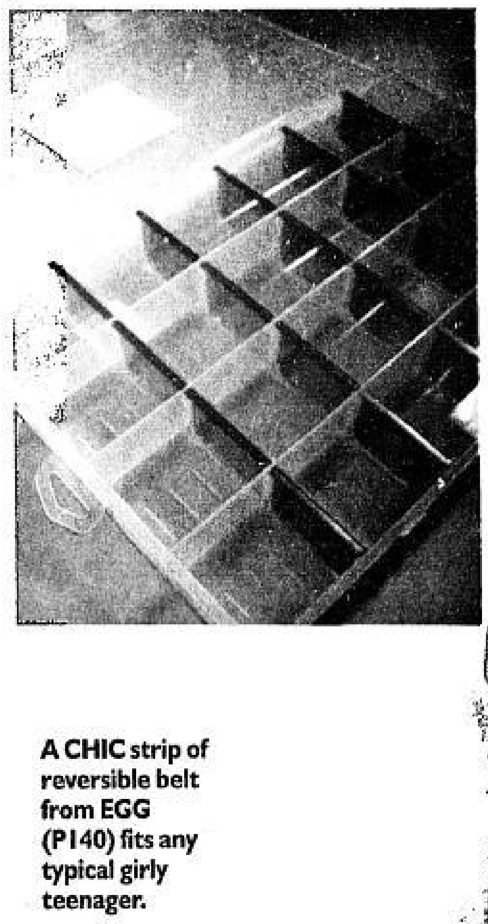
E-mail the author at ninomarksablan@yahoo.com



CELLPHONE accessories such as bracelets, necklaces, pouches and trinkets can be appreciated by anyone as long as the design is unisex. A card of cellphone load is a great gift idea, too.



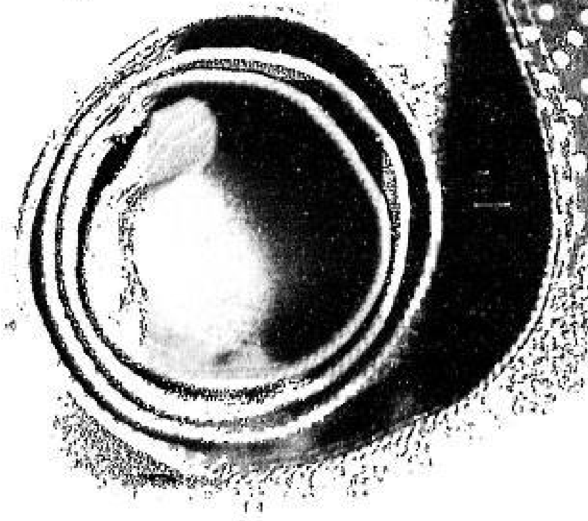
THE MAGIC 8 Ball (P449.75), which is available in Toy Kingdom and the SM toy section, is sure to give entertaining answers to any question and can be enjoyed by anyone of any age.



THIS plastic container from the SM department store (approximately P200) can house anything—from craft accessories to rings and earrings—with its little stalls. The movable partitions are a great idea since they can make space for watches and bracelets.

ACTIVITY kits and art sets will surely delight any little relative who shows up unexpectedly during your family get-together.

A CHIC strip of reversible belt from EGG (P140) fits any typical girly teenager.



Gift ideas for the housebound

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bU! Correspondent

WHETHER YOUR RECEIVER stays home by choice or by force, there's really no reason why being housebound should be ho-hum experience, especially during the Christmas season. Here's 2bU!'s recommended gift choices for all the homebodies out there.

Hardcover journals

Don't give just any notebook this Christmas and make gift-giving extra special with the likes of Dr. Seuss, Olivia, and the Hostess With the Mostess on cover. Prices range from P300 to P350, and you get discounts for bulk orders. Contact Ira of www.iadore.multiply.com.

Get connected

For just P999, and even P899, you can give your subject the joy of being one with the world with a new broadband Internet connection. Most people don't have broadband at home because they're too busy to file an application. You can assume that job and cover the initial payout, just to jumpstart things. Contact your ISP of choice for details.

Encourage a builder

For as low as P15, you can give your friend's woodshop craftiness a little boost with these unique do-it-yourself wood craft construction kits that will surely keep him or her preoccupied for quite a while. You can buy these at local bazaars and toy stores.

Movie passes from home

You don't need to get out of the house to watch the latest films and catch up with favorite foreign sitcoms. With SkyCable's prepaid pass, you can bring joy to your housebound friend or family member by giving him or her access to choice movies from the world's biggest TV channels. Silver prepaid cards cost P90 for three days, P380 for 15 days, and P636 for an entire month.

New sheets or pillows

Often, one's Christmas happiness depends on the simplest things, like a new set of comfortable bed sheets. You can purchase cool designs at SM Home World for as low as P300. To make it more sentimental and fun, give something with a reindeer or a Santa Claus design on it to jive with the season. Be sure to discreetly ask about your receiver's bed size, lest you give something that's too big or too small.

Basket of goodies

What's the best thing to do when it's the Christmas season and you're always home? Eat! Awaken the pseudo-chef in your friend or kin by gifting a basket of no-bake, no-cook goodies. Set aside a P600 to P1,000 budget and scan the supermarket for no-bake cookies, no-bake fudge brownies, microwavable macaroni, cheese mixes.

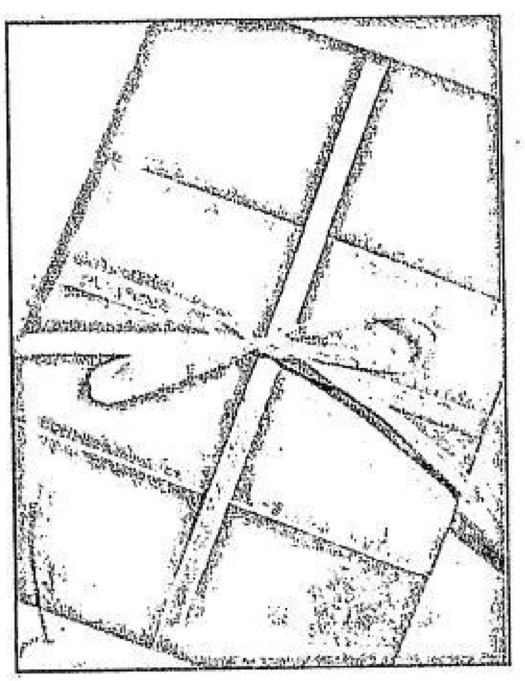
E-mail the author at ness_doctor@yahoo.com

JOURNALS with Dr. Seuss, Olivia and the Hostess With the Mostess on cover

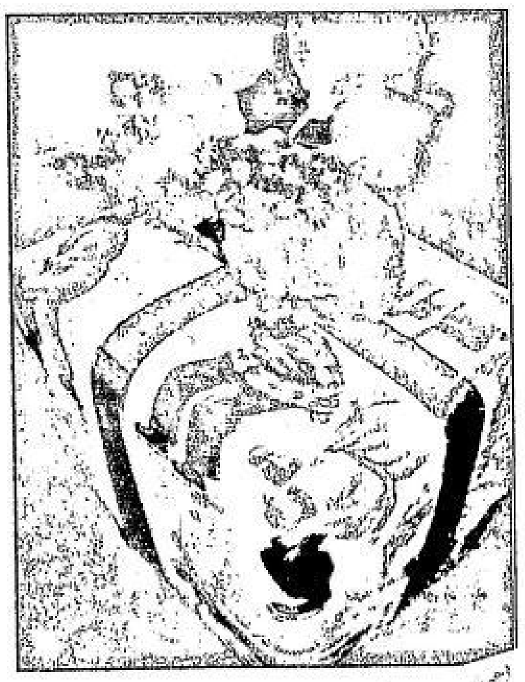
Relieve the drudgery of home by giving timely but exciting gifts

Peanut Butter No-Bake Cookie

BASKET of no-bake goodies



EVEN with plain and solid colored paper, you can come up with an interestingly-wrapped gift if you layer them. Layer as many times as you want and polish it off with a shiny strip of ribbon.



PAGES from old Christmas books can be ripped out and pasted together to make a huge sheet of yuletide wrapping paper.

THE RED-AND-GREEN combination is so overused, so why not use a blue-and-white color theme? Create your own snowflakes by folding square-shaped paper and cutting holes in various shapes. A silver strip of ribbon goes good with the snow theme.

Presentation is everything. A well-wrapped gift impresses its recipient

It's a wrap

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

WITH ALL THE MAD GIFT-giving that happens every Christmas season, gift-wrapping has become a very in-demand skill. While there are the professionals who do it for a certain fee, gift-wrapping is something that almost anyone can do, minus the amateur-looking results.

Below are a few wrapping basics.

Wrapping books, boxes or anything rectangular is one of the easiest to do. All it needs is a sheet of wrapping paper and maybe some strips of ribbon for detail. While an assortment of wrapping paper in various Christmas-related prints is readily available in the market, many other options are available. From magazine tear-outs to coloring book pages, from newspaper to maps, wrapping paper doesn't even have to be purchased.

Using solid-colored sheets of paper such as cartolina, felt, art, construction or kraft paper is a simple idea that can be made more interesting by layering or using color combinations. Popular themes are the usual red and green combo, brown with red and green for an earthy feel, Tiffany blue and white for winter effect, and white with silver or gold touches.

For personalized gift-wrapper, you can paint, stamp or write phrases, messages or even the family name on the paper.

A few fun details can also be added to give the gifts more dimension and make them look more attractive. Apart from the usual ribbons, curled or not, other accessories that can be attached are stickers, snowflake cut-outs, origami creations, fake flowers, twigs, bells and even candies.

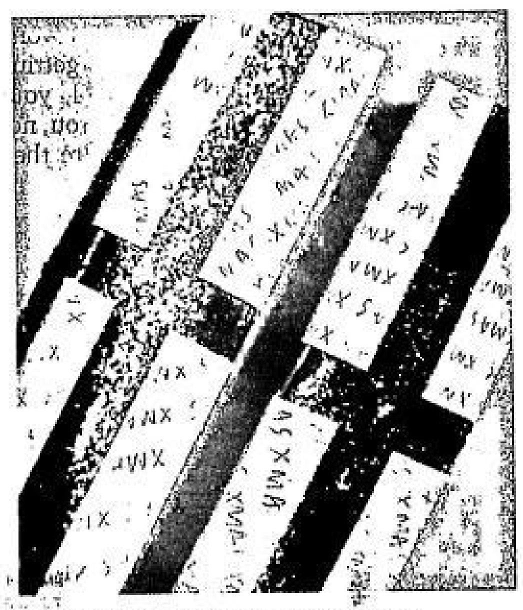
When it comes to more challenging items such as stuffed toys, T-shirts, trinkets and others, putting them in a paper bag is a better idea than wrapping them. While paper bags, both the expensive and the affordable, can be purchased in bookstores and department stores, making one is easy. You may ask a knowledgeable friend to teach you. Or you may surf the Internet to look for an instructional video.

Paper bags are fun to decorate. You can attach cards or images to it or even details such as handles, ribbons and buttons.

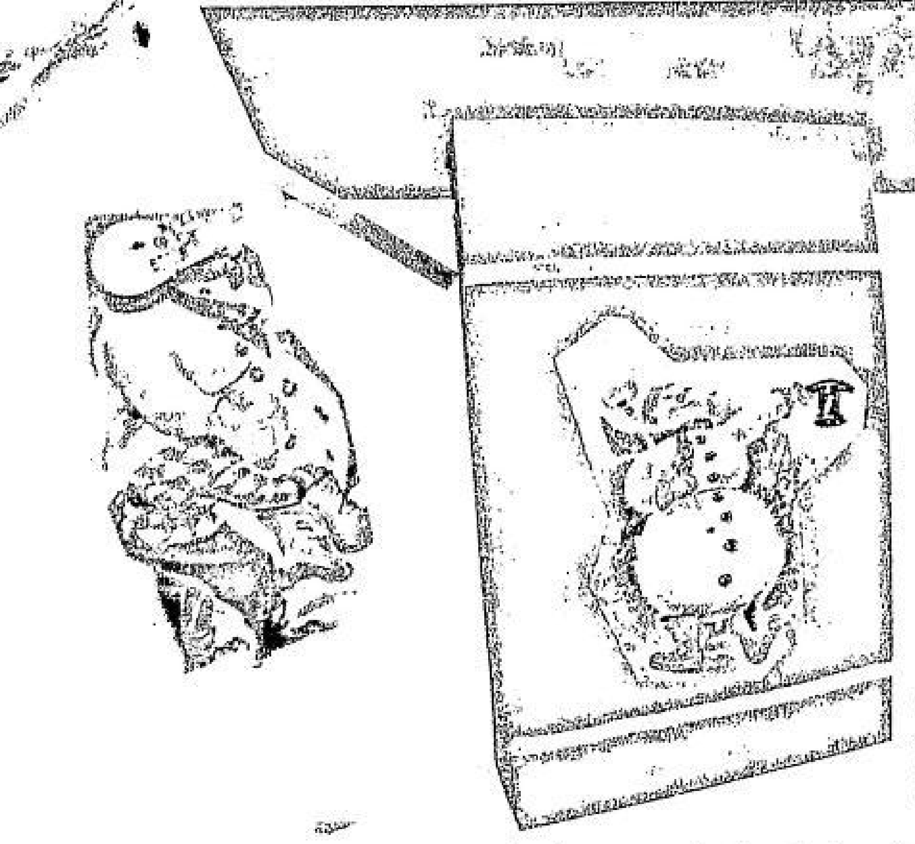
But don't limit yourself to paper bags since you can package your gifts using other items as well, such as Chinese food take-out boxes, tin cans and cloth.

For the final touch, don't forget the gift tag. Ready-made tags are in abundance at the mall, but making your own is simple and practical. Any type of paper can be used as tag, but the harder and thicker the paper, the better. Once it is cut to the preferred size (fun shape-edged scissors can be used), you may decorate it with borders, glitter, stickers, doodles and even puncher-holes. If you're on a tight budget, use the blank side of business cards that you don't need anymore.

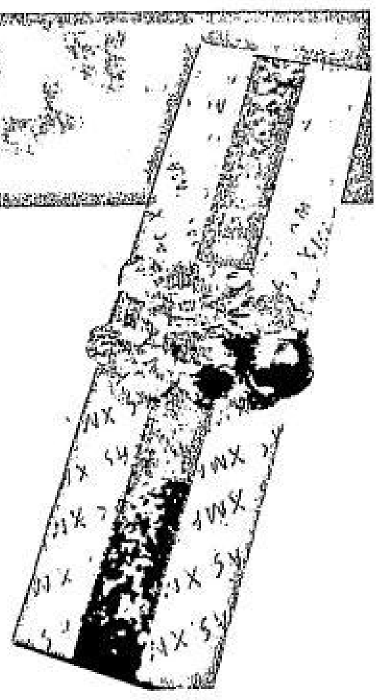
E-mail the author at ninomarksablan@yahoo.com



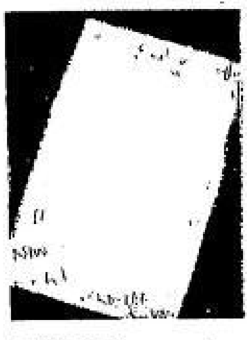
YOU CAN use plain cartolina as gift-wrapping paper, but don't forget to decorate it with Christmas-related scribbles or doodles using felt-tip pens or paint. Add strips of ribbon in yuletide colors.



PAPER bags are perfect for gift items that are hard to wrap or for those that you don't want to put inside a box. Embellish ready-made or make-your-own paper bags with cut-out Christmas images and ribbons, sequins, glitter and stickers.



ORNAMENTS such as crystals and bells, twigs, fake flowers and the like make great finishing touches.



A PAPER bag made of personalized gift-wrapping paper with scribbles can be sealed with paper clips in Christmas colors.

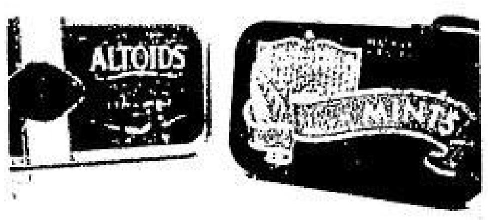
Gift guide for coffee lovers

By Leslie Ann Tan
2bU! Correspondent

A COFFEE LOVER'S needs are simple. We need a good coffee press to make our favorite blend, interesting flavors for our coffee beans to keep our excitement, and a solid mug to keep the liquid. Throw in a box of mints to freshen our breaths, and perhaps add a couple of great books for nights when we can't sleep. Happy shopping!

A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS
THE KITE RUNNER
pray

BOOKS: Fully Booked, P600-P800



COFFEE Mints: Marks & Spencer, P130

COFFEE Mugs: Starbucks, P385

SECOND CUP
GIVE UP BAD DESIGN FOR GOOD
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COFFEE Press: Bodum in Rustan's, P800-P1,000

JACK DANIEL'S

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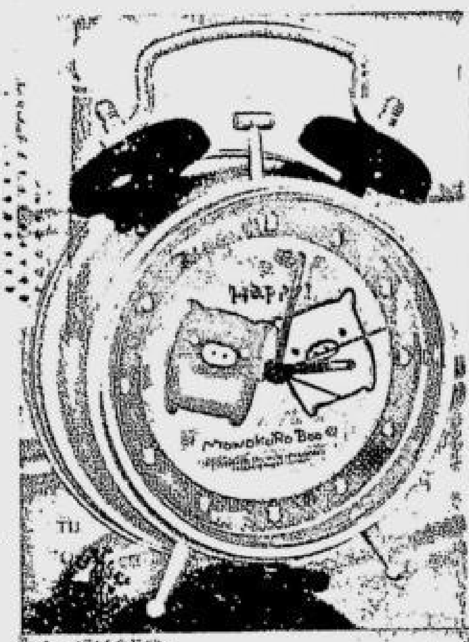
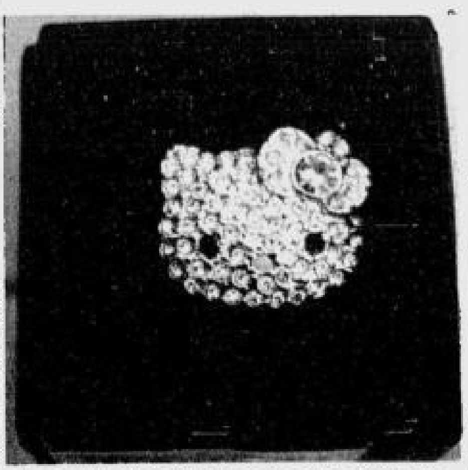


START your morning right with a cute alarm clock, P299.75



A RHINESTONE brooch adds glitter to your outfit.

BLING for your phone. Cellphone charm, P649.50

Hello Kitty

TICKLED pink. Jacket, P2,999.75

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For the little girls who never grew up

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudy Esperas

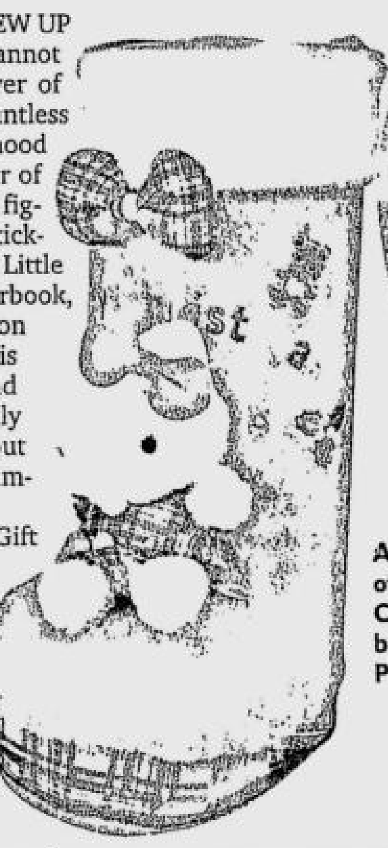
KIDS WHO GREW UP in the '80s cannot deny the power of Sanrio. I spent countless hours of my childhood sprawled on the floor of Gift Gate, trying to figure out which new stickers to get for my Little Twin Stars stickerbook, checking if the lock on that Keroppi diary is brother-proof and wondering if I really couldn't live without that Hello Kitty gumball machine.

A recent trip to Gift Gate brought that little girl back to life again.

On this page are top picks for the little girls who never grew up:

MAKE sweet music. Guitar case, P699.75

Hello Kitty



ADD a touch of kitsch with Christmas boots, P1,299.75

BOWL them over with a *kikay* bowling ball.

Cuddle up with a sleeping bag, P3,799.50

SMART presents
VERTICAL HORIZON
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Give for a good cause

Here are some gift ideas that will surely land you on Santa's nice list

YABANG Pinoy Maria Clara *bayongs*, made by Indie Art Manila. Large *bayong*, P700

Compiled by Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

DO YOU REGRET spending a huge chunk of your savings for gifts that end up under office desks or in a garage sale? Are you tired of wracking your brain on what gifts to give to people who seem to have everything?

Here are ideas that will surely warm the hearts of the giver and receiver of these awesome gifts. From Coffee Tree Cards for your caffeine-loving boss to fashionable ballet flats that will surely make people pretty in pink and spread awareness on breast cancer, these cause-oriented goodies will surely land you a spot on Santa's 2008 nice list.

Live Green

Live Green is the environmental program of the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) that aims to communicate ways to save the earth. Live Green eco bag (P150); umbrella, in black or white (P250); T-shirt (S-XL, P250); tips (set of 16 cards, P99). Contact 0928-4794374; e-mail livegreenmerchandise@gmail.com.

PLASTIC IS NOT FANTASTIC!

Luntian bags

Luntian bags is the brainchild of Ichay Bulaong. The bags don't only minimize (or eliminate) the use of plastic bags, but they help the communities of San Teodoro, Mabini, Batangas as well. These eco bags are available in five designs and in two sizes: regular (P100) or large (P110). Contact Bulaong at 0918-9140446; e-mail ibulaong@gmail.com; visit http://luntianbags.wordpress.com.

Figaro Foundation Corp.

Figaro Foundation Corp. is the social arm of Figaro Coffee Company. It has been planting coffee trees for 10 years now. Every planting season, Figaro volunteers, customers and friends trek to Benguet, Cavite or Batangas to plant coffee trees not only for the industry's survival but also to encourage people to adopt organic ways of farming.

'Plant a Tree for Me' Christmas cards

As an alternative to the usual gifts, Figaro Foundation is inviting companies and individuals to give a "Coffee Tree" planted and cared for by Figaro in its various pilot farms around the country. For a nominal price, Figaro will plant trees for individuals and companies interested in reaping the following benefits: Coffee industry survival, organic farming promotion and sustainable agriculture. Call 6386724; e-mail info@figarocoffee.com; visit www.figarocoffee.com/csr.htm.

ICanServe Foundation

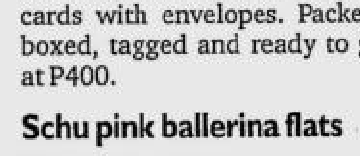
ICanServe is an advocacy group that empowers women with breast cancer. Volunteers are cancer survivors willing to share their time with other patients and survivors. Its mission is to arm women with breast-cancer and -care information so they can make decisions about their health. It also provides access to special services that will help the breast-cancer survivor recover and heal more effectively.

ICanServe contribution Christmas card

Adorned by an ornament that can be detached to hang on the holiday tree, the card includes a brief explanation that you (the giver) have made a donation in honor of the recipient. These cards note that each contribution will sustain campaigns on women's health and subsidize treatment for cancer patients. A minimum donation is P150 per card.

ICanServe boxed gift set with inspiring themes such as Hope, Celebrate, Believe and I Can, this set includes a handy scribbler, pocket-size notepad, eight folded gift cards and 12 flat cards with envelopes. Packed, boxed, tagged and ready to go at P400.

Schu pink ballerina flats



ICanServe has partnered with Schu, which has come up with a pair of pink ballet flats dedicated to the cause. Proceeds of sale will help raise awareness and subsidize medical care for women with breast cancer. Ballet flats (P1,499) are available at Glorietta 3, Ayala Center (0915-5761800); Shangri-La Plaza, Robinson's Galleria, SM Mall of Asia (0906-2981194); Chimes, Davao City (082-2258997, 0920-9511830); TriNoma, QC (901-3708, 0905-3299368); Ayala Cebu, Cebu City (032-4125261); www.schu-shop.com. Contact ICanServe at (632) 6873942; e-mail icanserve@yahoo.com; visit www.icanserve.net.

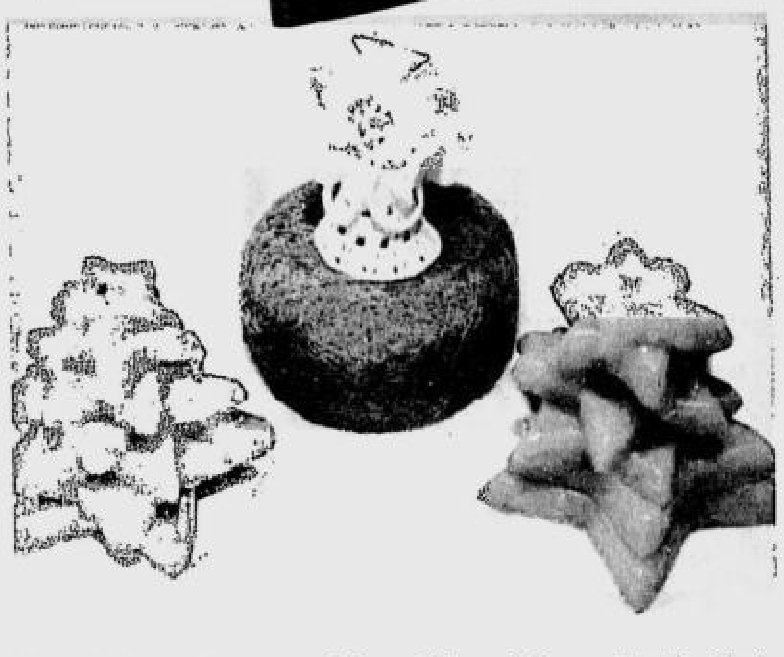
Carewell Community Foundation Inc.

Incorporated in 2005, the Cancer Resource and Wellness (Carewell) Community is a nonprofit foundation that provides support, education, and hope to persons with cancer and their loved ones. What they offer: Carewell donation card, P100; Halu-Halo Espesyal book, P100; tote, P100. Call 893004, 7510242, 0916-2531523; e-mail info@carewellcommunity.org; visit www.carewellcommunity.org.

Yabang Pinoy

The "Yabang Pinoy" campaign aims to spark a "social epidemic" of Filipinos believing in themselves, supporting fellow Filipinos and buying and consuming Filipino products. Merchandise includes Yabang Pinoy band, P50; shirts, P315; ladies shirts, P375; *bayong* with keychain and pouch, made by Indie Art Manila; bikinis designed by Twinkle Feraren, P1,500. Call 0917-5277141,0917-8151513; e-mail info@yabangpinoy.com; visit www.yabangpinoy.com.

Gifts and Graces



Gifts and Graces is a collection of products made by Filipinos coming from different socio-economic backgrounds and cultures, all worthy of being part of Santa's Cause.

Mangyan women from Sablayan, Mindoro Oriental, make beaded accessories which are sold with the help of the Missionary Servants of the Holy Spirit.

TLC is a special education center catering to individuals challenged by autism, Down syndrome, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, AD/HD and other development difficulties. As part of their therapy, bead and craft items are handmade by special students who make these unique products part of their therapy.

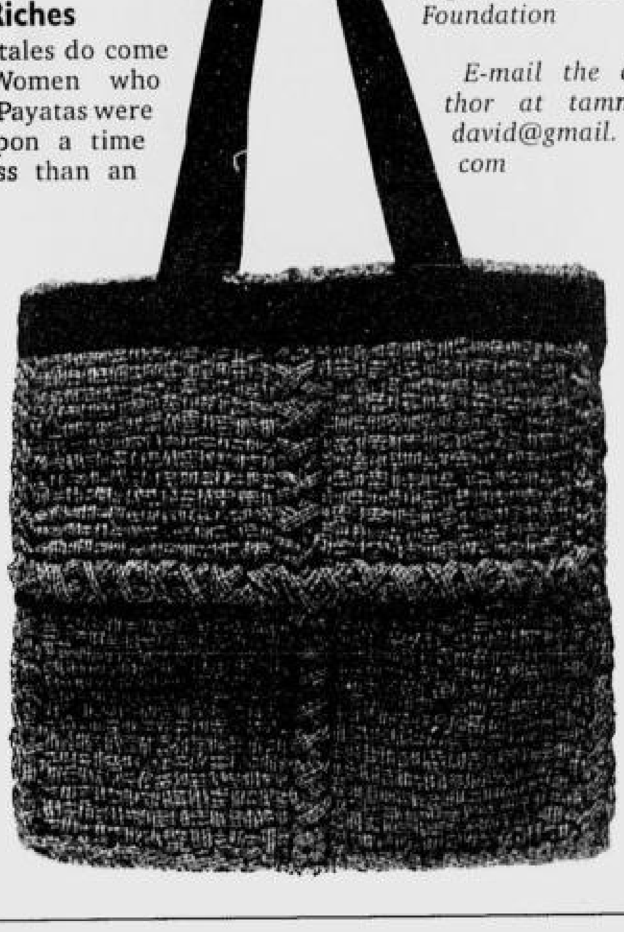
Ex-convicts or released prisoners under the Pag-asa sa Paglaya (PSP) Multipurpose Cooperative make candles to support their families. The St. Claire Patronage for the Sick and Poor sell Kapitbahayan Candles, which augment the modest income of poor women and empower them to become entrepreneurs.

Also, 47 families from the village of Kiloloron, Quezon, creatively use cogon grass, fallen banana trunks and weeds from their surroundings to make their meticulously designed handmade paper. Their earnings become proceeds to assist victims of recurring flash floods in the towns of Real and Nakar in Quezon. Aside from helping these families, you'd be helping the environment, too!

Products are available at Gifts and Graces Booth, Glorietta Activity Center until Dec. 15.

For a complete catalog, contact Greg Perez at 0906-3022668; e-mail giftsandgraces@yahoo.com; visit www.giftsandgraces.com.

Rags2Riches



Fairy tales do come true. Women who lived in Payatas were once upon a time paid less than an hour's worth of minimum wage for a whole week's labor. Their products were ordinary rags sold by middlemen who imposed a huge markup. For these women, it was just a regular's day of doing Cinderella work without being properly compensated for their efforts.

Rags2Riches is the fairy godmother in this story, a social enterprise initiated by young professionals and the Simbahang Lingkod ng Bayan. The women were able to innovate their products from the lowly "rag" to high-value fashion and decorative items: Ange tote, P995; Mark wine holder, P420; Maan envelope clutch, plain, P240; Javy eyeglass case, P135; Memey vanity kit (small P195, large P225); Tony tote, P675; Jane purse, P135; Cynthia bag, P560; Reese yoga mat bag, P480.

Visit www.r2r.slb.ph; e-mail r2rcorp@gmail.com; call 4266101 loc. 3440/3441 or 0905-3273999.

With reports from Angeli Ko of Let's Go Foundation

E-mail the author at tammy-david@gmail.com

What did you do to change the world in 2007?

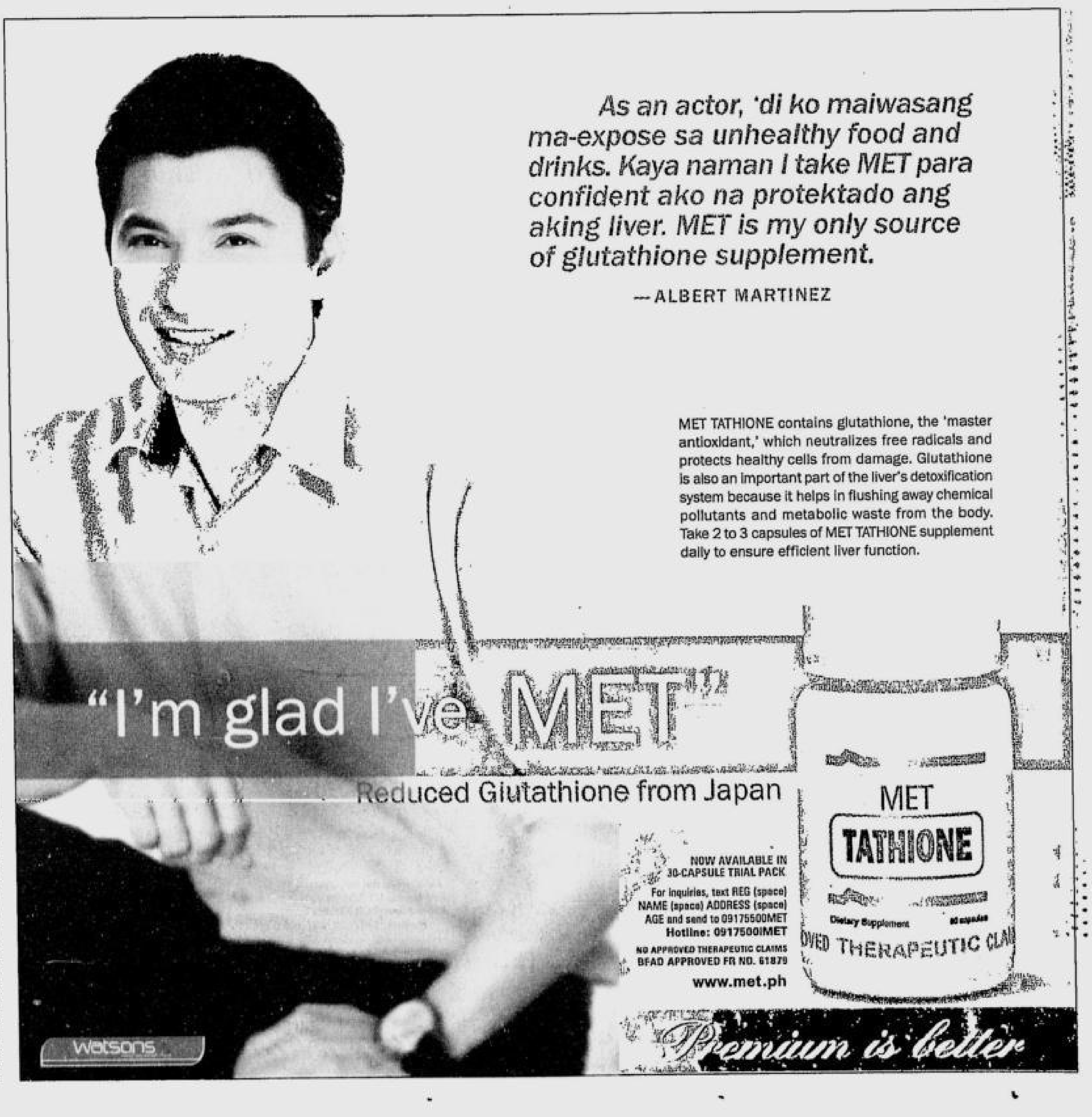
THE YEAR 2007 HAS GIVEN you a little over 11 months—what did you do with all that time? We want to measure the past year with good deeds—in hopes of encouraging more people to make a difference next year. We want to know—what did you do to change the world in 2007?

It doesn't have to be mind-blowing and earth-shaking. Every little thing counts.

Did you help an old lady cross the street? Did you become more active in church? Did you bring a stray cat home? Did you write letters to people in prison? Did you rescue anyone? Did you help a friend with a problem? Did you sacrifice yourself for someone else?

This is your chance to tell your story.

E-mail your story to changetheworld2007@gmail.com along with photos and captions. Don't forget to add your name, age, school/office and contact info. The best stories will be published in next week's 2bU!


As an actor, 'di ko maiwasang ma-expose sa unhealthy food and drinks. Kaya naman I take MET para confident ako na protektado ang aking liver. MET is my only source of glutathione supplement.

—ALBERT MARTINEZ

MET TATHIONE contains glutathione, the 'master antioxidant,' which neutralizes free radicals and protects healthy cells from damage. Glutathione is also an important part of the liver's detoxification system because it helps in flushing away chemical pollutants and metabolic waste from the body. Take 2 to 3 capsules of MET TATHIONE supplement daily to ensure efficient liver function.

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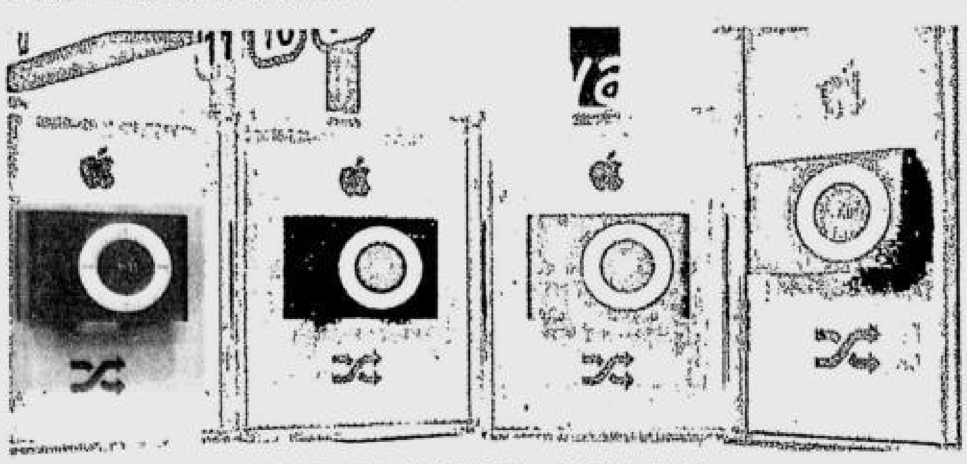
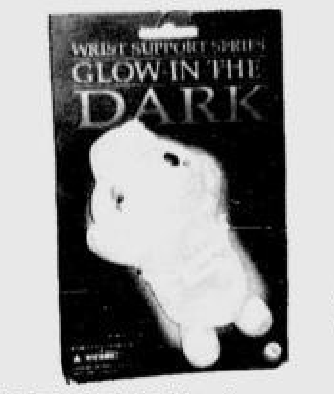
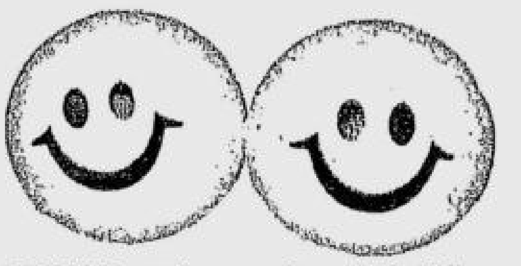


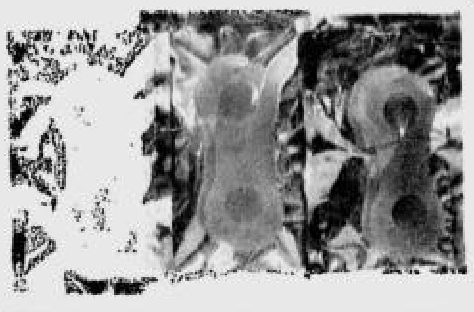
EAR CANDY. 2nd-gen 1gb iPod Shuffle, P4200 each, Digital Walker



FOR MARATHON typing. Glow-in-the-dark Wrist Support series, P129.95, It's Cool



SQUEEZE out the stress. Stress balls, P25 each, Greenhills tiangge



WIND it up. Earphone line rewinders, P95 each, Digital Walker

2bU! lists some de-stressing, detoxifying delights for those who badly need it the most

Swell stuff for the stressed-out student

Text and photos
by Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING MAY be enough to give you a massive migraine, but what do you give to students like yourself who are stressed out the whole year round? Fret no more—2bU! lists some tried-and-tested ideas guaranteed to keep the student from accidentally popping an artery amid the several deadlines.

Caffeine fix

Short of actually propping up their eyelids with toothpicks, students will do (and drink) just about anything to stay awake and finish their merciless pile of reading material. Coffee is their best friend, no doubt about it. Gourmet ground coffee from Marks & Spencer or any of your friendly neighborhood coffee shops is a surefire way to put a grateful smile on your pals' tired faces. Gift certificates are also practical for all-nighters.

If you're taking a trip way up north, you can buy really good but really cheap freshly ground coffee in the Baguio market stalls. The famous Philippine Civet coffee beans are a unique blend that caffeine connoisseurs will enjoy—just don't tell them how the coffee beans acquire that distinct flavor.

Or if you're on a tight budget, you can simply buy them a cup of coffee at Starbucks to help them get that elusive planner that they've been painstakingly collecting stickers for. Trust us, every drink helps.

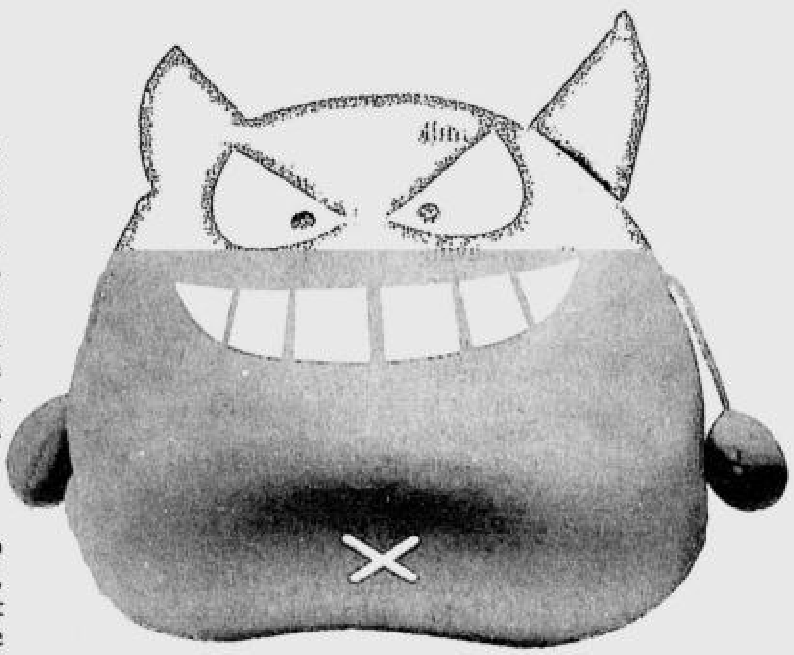
Study buddies

While it's painful to see your grade-conscious friends all hunched over and trying hard to concentrate, there are some things you can give them to make study time a little more comfy.

You can buy wooden bookstands at flea markets or bazaars everywhere. It's Cool at TriNoma or Eastwood sells glow-in-the-dark rubber wrist support cushions that come in cute animal shapes—these are perfect for those who have lots of reports to write. The same store also carries U-shaped neck cushions, which provide support for stiff neck-prone people.

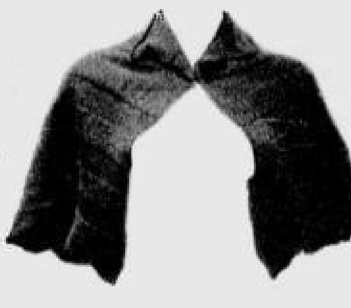
Of course, a cram session wouldn't be complete without the ultimate study buddy: an MP3 player. (Psst, moms and dads: the newest iPod Shuffle is a really, really cool gift idea.) If your bud already has one, get him or her a pair of in-ear headphones to completely tune out the rest of the world. Digital Walker has these in different colors, along with other nifty accessories.

For the fashionistas who love to study in chilly coffee shops, trendy boutiques like Tango, Girlshoppe and K2 carry knit capes and shrugs that are stylish alternatives to the usual jackets.



ADORABLE stress mufflers. Red devil pillow (top), P549.95, and rice grain pillow (bottom right), P399.95, It's Cool

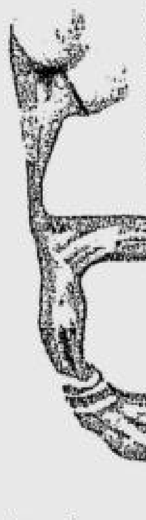
STIFF neck, begone! Bear U-cushion, P399.95, It's Cool



THICK ribbed crop cardigan, P695, Tango

THICK knit pea jacket in red, P995, Tango

STUDY in style. Sapphire cape with knot, P995, Tango



BLOCK OUT the noise. In-ear headphones, P495, Digital Walker

A little R&R

After a grueling semester, nothing beats a good mind, body and soul overhaul — so why not a massage? Contrary to popular belief, not all spa services are expensive. For the walking zombies out there, you can buy gift certificates at selected day spas, or you can pay for an hour's worth of home service massage.

You may also try foot spa or a manicure-pedicure at California Nails and Day Spa. Even the guys will love it, no matter how hard they try to resist the idea.

For those who haven't gotten a good night's sleep in ages, you can find really nice aromatherapy stuff at Beauty Bar and Crabtree & Evelyn, from scented candles and tension-relieving mint oils to cooling eye masks for those multiple eyebags.

CDs are always a safe bet for gifts, especially for music lovers. Chill-out sounds from trip-hop duo Mandalay and electronica master Moby can soothe frazzled nerves. Also, hot compilations like the "Hed Kandi: Serve Chilled" and "Café del Mar" series provide major ear candy if you want to help them set the mood for some R&R.

Comic relief

To help take their minds off school at least for a couple of hours, get your friends DVDs of brainless comedy such as "Napoleon Dynamite," "Dude, Where's My Car?" or the complete first season of "Ugly Betty," if it's already out. If these don't make your brain cells fall asleep from all that happy gas, we don't know what would.

As for thought-provoking reads, "The Secret" by Rhonda Byrne is a must-buy, especially if your friend needs some positive energy to help him or her get through the school year.

If they're the type who collect manga, Fully Booked has an entire section of those, translated into English. "Death Note," "School Rumble" and "Genshiken" are some of the hottest titles today.

'Care package'

Here's a brilliant idea: put together your own "care package" that contains inexpensive trinkets for those who badly need to release some stress in between study sessions. Here's a list of some popular suggestions:

Bubble wrap. We don't know why, but it's incredible how a few minutes of happily popping bubbles can release an enormous amount of stress. Try it, it's strangely addictive.

Stress balls. This is, hands-down, the most useful thing you can give to a student. It comes in all shapes and sizes, ranging from the usual colorful smiley faces to the more, um, creative designs. Best of all, it's dirt cheap. You can easily find some in *tiangges* or toy stores.

Brown paper bags. Nothing like a good ol' brown paper bag to relieve stress-induced hyperventilation. It's a weird idea for a gift item, but who knows? It might come in handy someday.

Scream pillows. Tired and sleepless due to your roommate's constant howls of frustration? Give her a thick, sturdy pillow to muffle the noise with every time she feels like screaming—the thick cotton can withstand it better than your eardrum could, anyway.

Chocolates. "Stressed" is just "desserts" spelled backwards. We say indulge, with or without the bulge! The undisputed champion of all guilty pleasures, chocolate tops the list of every student's midnight cravings for some brain food. Never mind the calories—even your weight-watching friends won't be able to resist gorging on these once exam week starts.

E-mail the author at avignacio@gmail.com.

I took MET supplement when I read that it whitens the skin. I was amazed to see that it whitened my skin evenly in as little as two weeks!

— JENNYLYN MERCADO

Glutathione inhibits the skin's Tyrosinase activity to block the formation of melanin, the pigment that gives skin its dark color. For quick results, take 2 capsules of MET TATHIONE twice a day, after meals. Take it continuously to sustain the glutathione in your system and maintain the whitening effect.

"I'm glad I've MET"

Reduced Glutathione from Japan

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SOMEHOW, YOUR GIFTS always seem to give the wrong message. So before you hand over another flop this Christmas, consider giving a present that imparts the warmest of sentiments.

How? It's as simple as sending your digital photos to Digiprint Online (www.digiprint.com.ph) or dropping your film rolls at any LBC or Digiprint Online branch.

Relive memories with Digiprint Online printing-and-delivery service that allows you to share celebrated memories with the ease of a click. All you have to do is send the photos you want developed and Digiprint Online will make sure it gets delivered right to your recipient's doorstep. The company not only delivers for free but will deliver anywhere in the Philippines as well.

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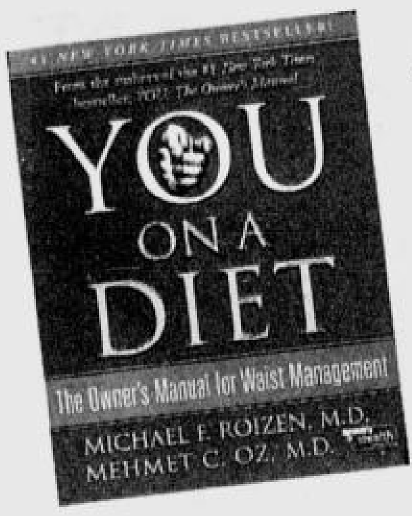
PERSONALIZED mouse pad

Merry Christmas and a healthy new year

Here are ideas for those who wish to start a healthy lifestyle after the holiday binge

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

GIVE THE GIFT OF A healthy lifestyle this Christmas without breaking your bank account with expensive gym equipment or week-long detox camps. Here are gifts for those who wish to start a healthy lifestyle after the holiday binge. These items will surely make your recipients eat, drink and be healthy during and after the holidays.



"You On A Diet: The Owner's Manual for Waist Management," by Mehmet C. Oz and Michael F. Roizen; P899; Powerbooks' powerbooks.com.ph

"You The Owner's Manual: An Insider's Guide to the Body that Will Make You Healthier and Younger," by Mehmet C. Oz and Michael F. Roizen; P995; Powerbooks' powerbooks.com.ph

"The Abs Diet"; P995

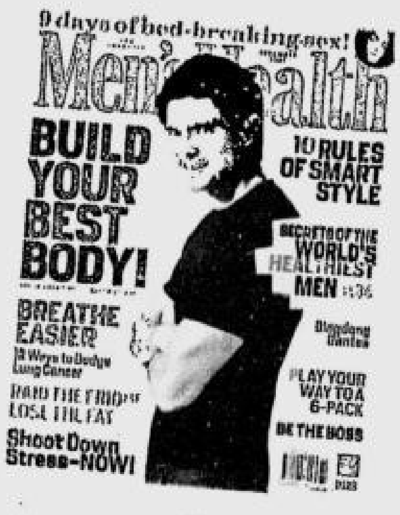
"Bob Greene: The Best Life Diet," by Bob Greene; P995

"Bob Greene: The Best Life Diet Daily Journal," by Bob Greene; P669

"Emotional Healing," by Jan De Vries; P439

"Fight Fat After 40," by Dr. Pamela Peeke; P285

Available at Powerbooks: Specialty Bookstore. Call 4901158; visit powerbooks.com.ph; e-mail ibid@powerbooks.com.ph.



Men's Health

Monthly bible for guidance and inspiration for healthy body and mind.

Call Hector Castillo at 689-1025; e-mail subscriptions@summitmedia.com.ph.

NIKE Package Tee Limited Edition Men's

Nike Package Tee Limited Edition

These limited-edition tees will definitely turn heads while working out around the park. Each tee comes in awesome packaging that will surely be a hit in exchange gifts.

Women's, P1,195. Available in fuchsia and off-white

Men's, P1,195. Available in blue and off-white

Available in Nike Stadium, 2/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 7527109.

NIKE Package Tee Limited Edition Women's

MIZUNO Wave Creation P5,295; (inset) Mizuno Wave Frontier, P3,995

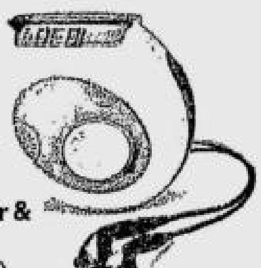
Mizuno running shoes

Who says a healthy new lifestyle starts with a gym membership or a personal trainer? Mizuno, a brand known for its technology and fashion sense, offers the best running shoe that makes a perfect fit in both foot type and active lifestyle with footwear specially designed for those with high arc or are flat-footed. Mizuno, the brand that introduced technology such as Beathed Thermo, Ice Touch, Airmesh, also offers a wide variety of footwear specially designed for golf, volleyball, football, baseball, badminton and many more.

Prices range from P2,995 to P3,495.

Available in all Mizuno retail stores: BMG Center 2/F Paseo de Magallanes; Megamall Upper G/F Building A; Festival Mall 3/F; Mall of Asia G/F, beside the I-Max Theater; Bonifacio High Street, Fort Bonifacio; and Club 650 Unit 1-8, Libis.

Call 7573160 loc. 805.



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OREGON Scientific Talking Pedometer with FM Radio (PE829)

Oregon Scientific Talking Pedometer with FM Radio (PE829)

Pedometer announces walking features and plays FM radio station through the same headphones!

Oregon Scientific Pedometer and FM Radio (PE316FM)

Listen to your favorite radio station while you work out.

Fifty-percent off on all Oregon Scientific items.

Available at Avant Greenbelt, 2/F, Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Call Kathy at 7582315-17.

Happy Food bars from Muesli and Granola Bakeshop

Crispy Crème-Nut Bar

A nut-so-sweet energy bar with almonds and cashew nuts, P175 per canister of 5 bars; P185 in a gift box with matching satin ribbon and gift card.

Crisp Ahoy! Chocolate Crisp Bar

The chocolate crunch bar with chocolate chips and walnuts, P175 per canister of five bars; P185, gift box.

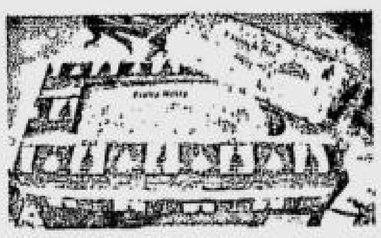
The No Nut-Sense Bar

For those not into nuts or can't do nuts, a crunch bar of whole wheat cereal, cornflakes, rolled oats and rice cereal, P170 per canister of five bars; P180, gift box.

For orders, call 0917-8118673 or e-mail thehappyfood@gmail.com.

All prices and promos are subject to change without prior notice.

E-mail the author at tammydavid@gmail.com



HAPPY Food bars

Shop online for your 'kikay' needs

HERE ARE KIKAY SHOP'S top choices for holiday shoppers.

1) The Miss "A" Kit equips girls on the go. Squeezed into the new must-have mini-accessory are a flashlight, scissors, needle and thread, perfume bottle, mirror, screwdriver, bottle opener, knife, tweezers, nail file, a pen and more. The Miss "A" Kit can handle any disaster, big or small.

The Miss "A" Kit retails for P1,250 with free shipping.

2) Clean Slate face milk from Leyende is your cleanser, makeup remover and toner in one. It may also be used as night moisturizer and shaving cream. It's a gentle but effective concoction of grade A beemilk, honey, sweet almond oil, coconut milk and pineapple extract, which is known in holistic and alternative medicine circles for its skin-clearing properties.

Clean Slate retails for P350 for the 100-ml bottle. Leyende also makes the highly sought-after Skin Butter, Body Exfoliants and Shower Gel.

3) The vanity bag is perfect for organizing your hand-carry mess. With convenient pockets, it has all the space for your wallet, car keys, *kikay* kit, diary, cell phone, etc. The large version retails for P225.

4) Available exclusively from the online Kikay Shop are Schu's large sizes and previous-season stock sold at 30-percent off! (P400 only for item in picture, 30-percent off on others).

5) Ready-wrapped handmade soaps are available if you don't want to bother with gift-wrapping. Sets of 3 are available for only P275 per box. A set of 18 pieces is also available for only P1,550.

6) Laptop sleeves from Punchdrunkpanda are excellent for protecting your expensive laptops. Available in 20 funky cool designs with a matching charger bag, it's a bargain at P700.

7) SacsnPacks Laptop Bags are versatile and can be used for any occasion. It comes in five designs and in various colors. Prices range from P1,250 for the Isabelle model to P2,250 for the top-selling Cassandra line.

All items are available at http://kikay.exchange.ph/shop.

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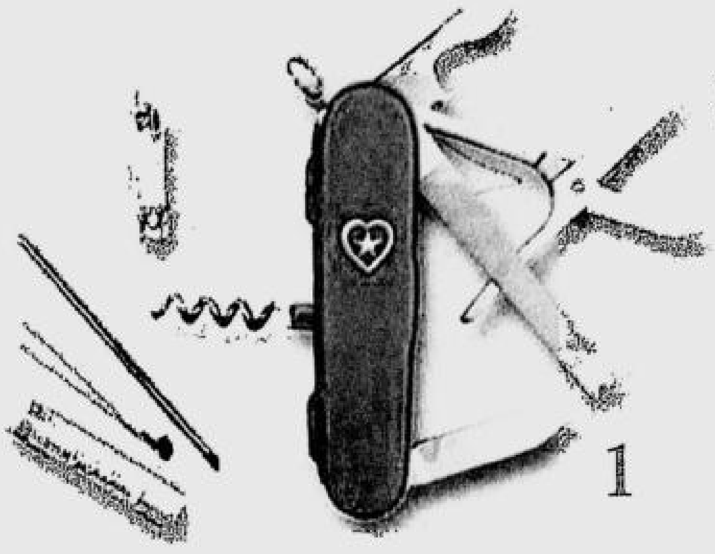

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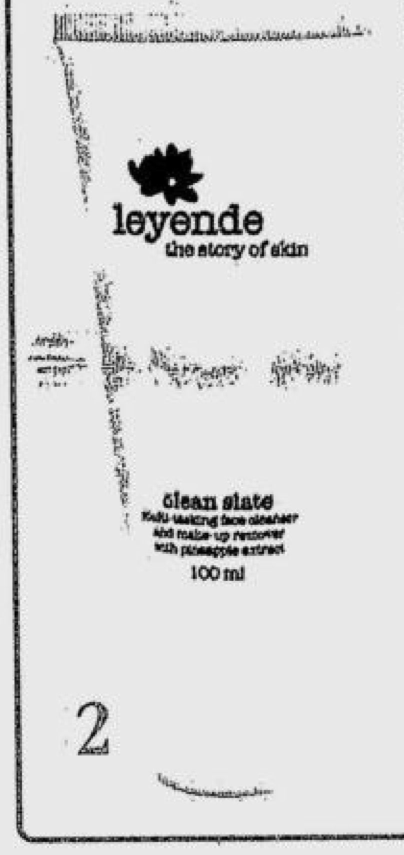

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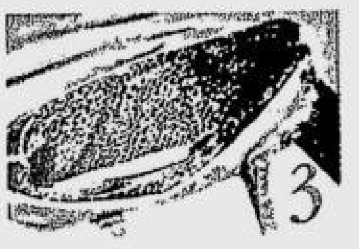

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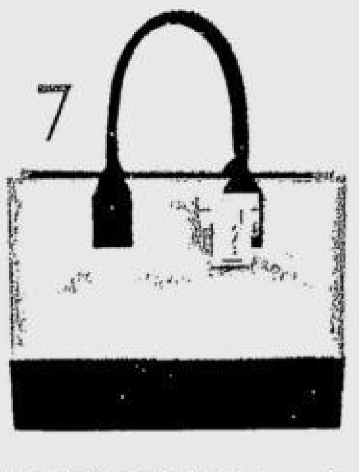

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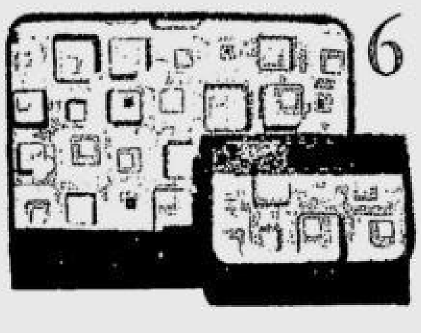

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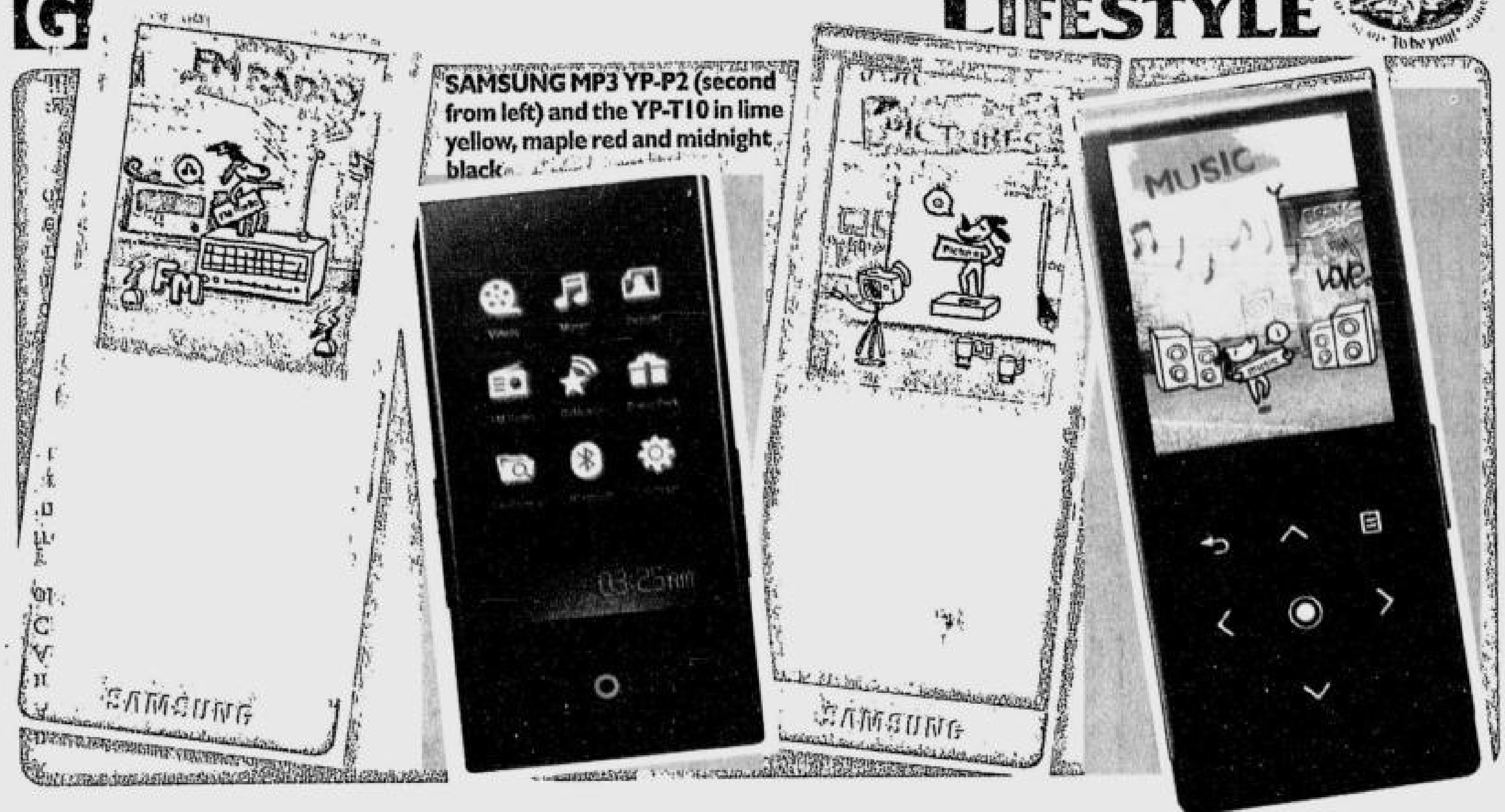


SAMSUNG MP3 YP-P2 (second from left) and the YP-T10 in lime yellow, maple red and midnight black.

ONLY 9.9mm slim, the YP-P2 showcases a 3" widescreen for one's viewing pleasure.

Music entertainment at your fingertips

Samsung's new pocket-sized MP3 players excel in design, video, sound and connectivity options

By Rowena C. Burgos

FINALLY INVADING the fast-growing and profitable MP3 business, Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. has recently launched the YP-P2, YP-S5 and YP-T10.

The world's biggest memory chip maker, Samsung already has five models in the MP3 market.

Like other big Asian brands, Samsung has its sights set on Apple's juicy market position.

Apple's popular iPod music player and iTunes music store have a 70 percent share of the global digital music player and music download markets. In the United States, its market share is 80 percent.

Sales of MP3 players are set to grow 57 percent this year after more than doubling in 2004, according to market research group iSuppli. It also predicts that sales will more than double by 2009.

Pocket-sized models

Samsung's new pocket-sized models excel in design, video, sound and connectivity options. Sound purists will appreciate the high-quality acoustics created by the company's sound technology, Digital Natural Sound engine (DNSe 2.0), inside Samsung's MP3 players. It reproduces the "genuine" stereo and deep bass sounds that one can experience by using bass-enhanced EP-150 earphones.

Groovy icons and graphic images guide the user through MP3 players' functions. For a customized look, users can choose their favorite photos or images as background of the menu.

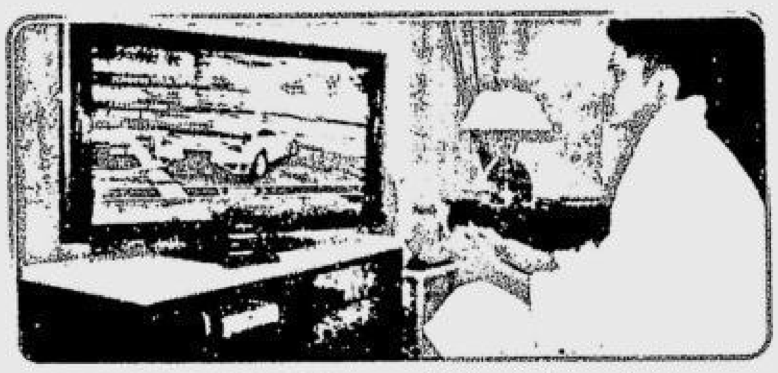
Enhanced with Bluetooth technology, all three MP3 players offer connectivity options to stereo headsets with remote control functions and portable speakers. Bluetooth simplifies file transfers and even connects to your mobile phone.

YP-P2

During a media presentation, Arnold Manabat, product manager for gadgets, flaunted one of the P2's more exciting abilities: One can answer a cellphone call through the player, which has a built-in mic.

The process is simple: Pair the P2 with your Bluetooth phone. Once paired, when your phone receives calls, the music on your P2 mutes and the screen offers you the chance to take the call through the player.

This is a handy feature: Not only will you never miss calls when music is blaring in your earphones, but you won't have to fish your cell out of your bag to answer the call.



THE SAMSUNG F8 LCD TV features 100Hz Motion technology, which eliminates blurring in fast-paced on-screen movements.

Additionally, the devilishly handsome P2 has a built-in sleep timer. Its 3-inch widescreen monitor displays 30 frames per second and has a 480 by 272-pixel resolution. Available in 2, 4 and 8 gb capacities, it is offered in black, white, and burgundy.

Because of its touch screen, the few buttons are for volume controls, power, and hold switches on the sides of the 3.9 by 2.1 by 0.4-inch body. An LED below the display looks like a button but exists only to flash a particular color when the device is in each of its different modes (blue, for instance, when it's in Bluetooth mode).

Navigation of the user interface is fast, and mistakes are simply and quickly undone. The various menus are intuitive, and like the iPod touch, controls appear over video or a Now Playing screen when the display is tapped. The Now Playing screen also offers several viewing options, from a real-time moving graphic EQ that pumps along with the music to song info and album art displays. Samsung also loaded the P2 with a capable FM tuner that's a snap to operate.

Samsung rates the battery life at 35 hours for music and 5 hours for video playback.

YP-S5

The follow-up to last year's YP-K5, Samsung's 14.95-mm YP-S5 has speakers with 1.5W stereo output, filling one's room with your favorite tunes.

Bluetooth also connects to your Bluetooth-enabled mobile phone, turning your YP-S5 into a hands-free speaker phone. Available in black and white, the 1.8" TFT display showcases your favorite photos, videos, e-books and flash games. Record memos on the voice recorder, listen to FM radio or download songs. With 2, 4 and 8 gb, you can have it all with the YP-S5.

Its built-in alarm works no matter what you're doing, whether you're listening to music, using the radio or watching video. With 24 hours of playtime with earphones and 5 hours with the slide-out speakers, the gadget gives you a lot of time to share your favorite music with loved ones.

THE YP-S5 has speakers with 1.5W stereo output.

YP-T10

The T10 picks up where last year's T9 left off. A slice of music entertainment at 7.9 mm and 43 grams, the YP-T10 is loaded with the latest multimedia functions such as music player, FM radio, photo album, video player, voice recorder, text reader and game player.

Available in 2, 4 and 8 gb and in midnight black, mystic purple, maple red, lime yellow and white cloud, YP-T10 allows you 30 hours of earphone playback and 4 hours of speaker playback before your next battery recharge.

Its 2-inch screen plays video in crystal clear QVGA resolution, while DNSe 2.0 pumps out powerful sound.

F8 LCD TV

Aside from the cutting-edge and features-packed MP3 players, Samsung also recently launched its F8 LCD TV.

In the same media presentation, Roma Ramirez, product manager-CTV Marketing Department, demonstrated the model's 100Hz Motion technology, which eliminates blurring in fast-paced on-screen movements.

"With Samsung's super clear LCD panel technology and Full HD 1080p, the F8 delivers blacker blacks and resolutions nearly two times sharper than conventional HD TVs," she said. "Equipped with wide color enhancer, the F8 can create a wider range of colors to make the traditionally weak green and blue look deeper and clearer."

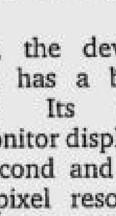
For movie buffs and game enthusiasts, the F8 features two additional built-in subwoofers that drive more power into the lower frequencies of the 2.2 channel stereo, while Samsung's Game Mode deepens the units' rich bass, sharpens images and provides richer colors.

Available in 40", 46" and 52" models, the F8 has three HDMI inputs that allow users to connect their HD components like Blu-ray players, game consoles and camcorders. Its Wiselink USB 2.0 feature also enables handy connections with digital cameras and MP3 players.

Samsung's F8 LCD TV and MP3 players YP-P2, YP-S5 and YP-T10 are now out in the market.

FROM left, Dino Obias, GM, Product Marketing Group; Arnold Manabat, product manager for gadgets; Roma Ramirez, product manager, CTV, and Jerry Lacson, GM, Marketing Team.

What's in a name?



Password

Serena Madrigal Gelb

Conclusion

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN an APBT (American Pit Bull Terrier) and the American Staffordshire Terrier is one of registry. APBT was coined by C.Z. Bennet who started the United Kennel Club in order to set up a stud book for Bull Dog type breeders in the America. Another registry for APBT is made by the American Dog Breeders Association. The American Kennel Club or AKC started accepting registry of the APBT 38 years later.

However, to distance themselves from being associated with dog fighting, the AKC decided to change the breeds name in their books to the Staffordshire Terrier. When the US started importing and registering Staffordshire Terriers from England and Ireland, the AKC changed the name of the locally bred dogs to American Staffordshire Terriers. Some dogs are dually registered as APBT under one registry and "Am Staff" at the AKC. Pete, the dog in the classic children's comedy, "Our Gang/Little Rascals," was one of the first dually registered dogs. In 1972, AKC officially closed its registry books on UKC dogs but UKC still accepts registrations of AKC Dogs. Our own dogs being classic red nose dogs are dual registered with both the UKC & ADBA. Before the advent of the modern dog registry books, these bully type dogs were variously known as pit dogs, bull dogs, band dogs, pit bull dogs, etc.

Size

My family's pit bulls are large. They are more closely related to the American Bull Dog of today and the original butcher's dogs of Victorian England.

Many pit bulls are small in size: between 25 to 45 lbs. Most pit bulls used in the dog fighting ring are traditionally of the smaller variety since dogs are matched by weight.

I also believe that these smaller dogs may have more terrier in them. They tend to be more physically active and feisty. The bigger pit bulls tend to be more placid. Both our big pits can stay lying down for hours, quietly observing what is going around them. They tend not to follow their owners around like shadows, but rather prefer to keep an eye on them from a strategic spot and only move when necessary.

Dog fighting

Because of the history of the breed, one cannot omit addressing the issue of dog fights. Personally, I condemn dog fighting as a cruel and useless sport. Pit bulls were originally bred to control kines by grabbing their faces. Therefore, in a dog fight, pit bulls fight head to head. Most bites and tears occur in the dog's head and fore regions.

Most dogs sustain multiple face and eye punctures. But most dogs in a fight die from asphyxiation due to swollen tissues around the head, face and nostrils. The swollen tissues block air from the nasal passages, thus the dog suffocates. It is a slow and very painful death.

Rise of the pit

I was born in Los Angeles. And in the 1990's it was a common sight for us to see a movie star sipping his latte and eating his fresh baked pastry in front of La Brea Bakery with his pit bull at his feet. It became fashionable for movie stars to walk around L.A. with their pits (bought from a fancy kennel or saved from the pound).

At around the same time, many Latinos took up dogfighting in the less glitzy parts of LA (perhaps to replace cockfights). What existed as a relatively small number of illegal blood sport rings in the back woods of the southern US, spread exponentially into urban areas. Soon drug lords were using pit bulls to guard their illegal stash.

Again we come back to the issue of breeding. One can imagine that many pit bulls bred to be short-term fodder for the fighting ring may not have been bred for pet temperament.

Also, owing to the public eye on Hollywood stars and their pit bulls, it became cool and trendy to own a pit. Backyard and other profit-hungry puppy mills increased their production of pit bull pups without regard for quality.

Bad rap

Historically, the rise in popularity of a breed coincides with the decline of quality in temperament of that breed. Collies were overbred in the 1960's when the "Lassie" T.V. series was popular. The result: many snappy, fear-biting collies with undershot jaws, kept in urban and suburban households without regard to the fact that collies are herding dogs best suited to live in an area that offers them wide open space amd plenty of physical exercise. Many of these unfortunate pets probably ended up in the pound.

My mom recalls that in the seventies, the bad rap for "traitorous and violent dogs" was pinned on the Doberman Pinscher. Many people considered them unreliable devil dogs at the time. Their popularity as protection dogs in the 1970's again encouraged unscrupulous breeders to breed them fast and furious, spawning poor temperament. Today, one does not hear of traitorous Dobermans.

Positive contributions

Unfortunately, today it is the pit bull that is taking most of the heat from some sectors of society. There are some US states and some countries that ban the breed or its importation. Some groups are trying to pass breed-specific legislation to ban or euthanise them. The truth is, any dog of any breed and with poor temperament, especially if large sized, can be a danger. Especially if its owner is also irresponsible. As the slogan goes, there are no bad dogs, only bad owners. Be reminded too that there are many, many pit bulls and their owners making a lot of positive contributions to society. Pit bulls work as canine police, drug detection dogs and therapy dogs.

The key to any dog is proper care and breeding. Do not buy from a backyard breeder or a pet store that gets its supply of dogs from puppy mills. Get to know personally your intended puppy's breeder and its sire and dam. Read up on the breed you wish to introduce to your home.

Some pit bull resources: " The Working Pit Bull," by Diane Jessup; www.badrap.com, and www.pitbullovers.com.

E-mail the author at serenaswam@gmail.com.

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INSIDE
- **Is 'Golden Compass' anti-Christian?** /I1, Feedback I6
- **No 'I love you' from Lani to Bong** Rushes /I5

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RUEL Antipuesto, left, and Jerrold Tarog JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

First-timers named Best Directors

"We made this film to introduce ourselves to the public," Jerrold Tarog said of "Confessional," the result of his collaborative effort with Ruel Bahis Antipuesto. Both first-time filmmakers, Tarog and Antipuesto bagged the biggest number of awards at the Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival, concluded Saturday night—including Best Picture and Best Director honors. ***Story on Page I4.***

'The Da Vinci Code' sequel

DID YOU KNOW...

WASHINGTON—A SEQUEL to the blockbuster thriller "The Da Vinci Code" is set to lift the veil on mysterious Freemason symbols carved into the very fabric of the historic streets and buildings of the US capital.

Novelist Dan Brown has set the new adventures of his scholar-adventurer Robert Langdon (played by Tom Hanks in the film version) right in the heart of Washington, which could reveal some astonishing facts for history buffs.

Washington has historic roots in Freemasonry, a widespread fraternity practicing secret rituals. *AFP*

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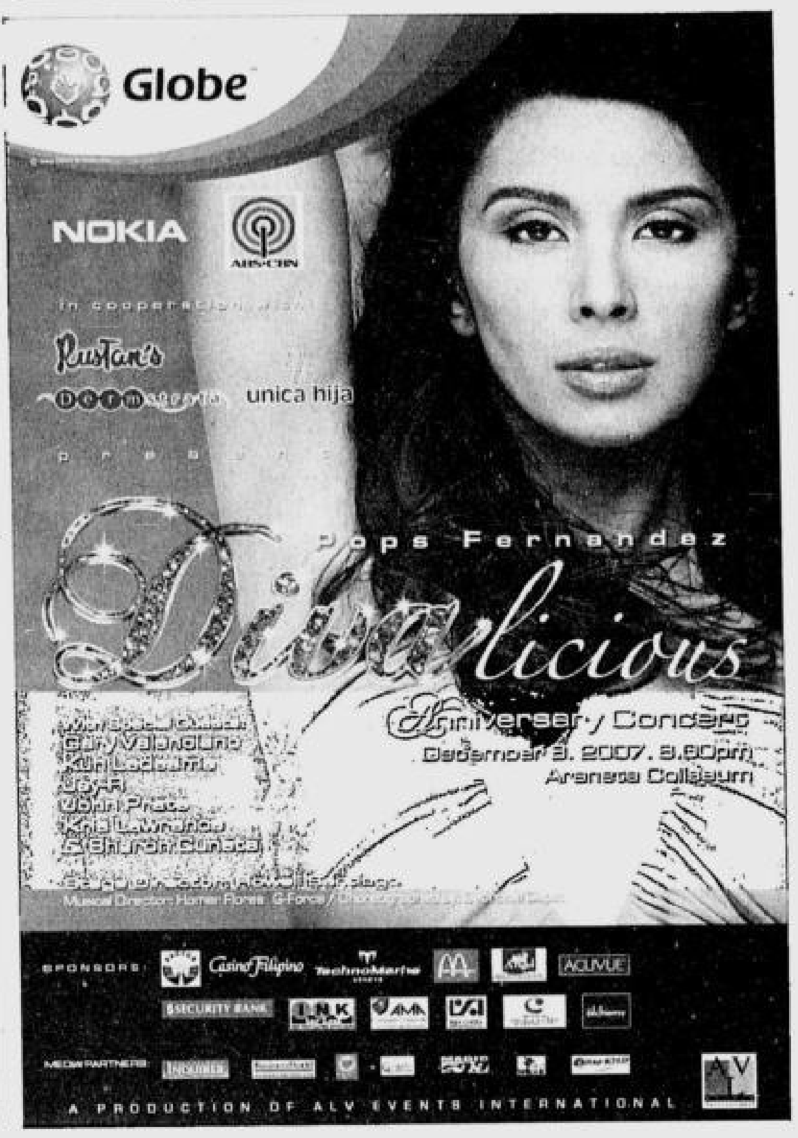

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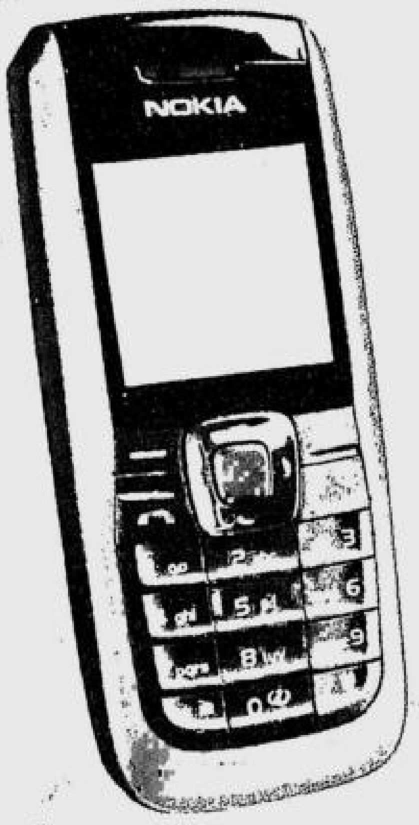

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- GPRS, MMS, JAVA, WAP

Motorola W218
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- FM Radio
- Calendar with date-book

Samsung X510
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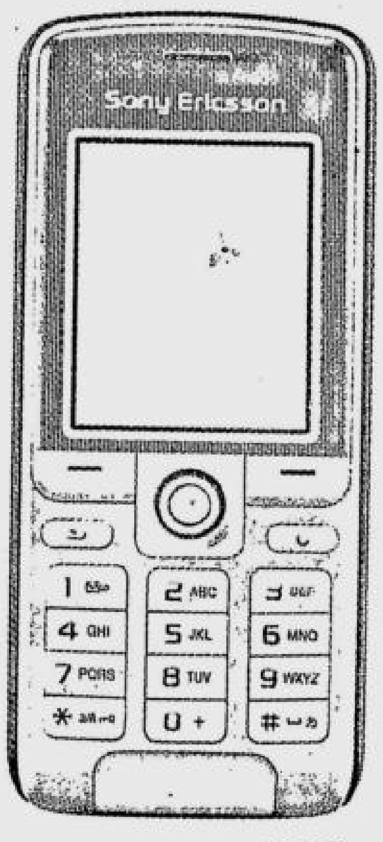
- Triband, Infrared
- GPRS, WAP



Sony Ericsson K320i
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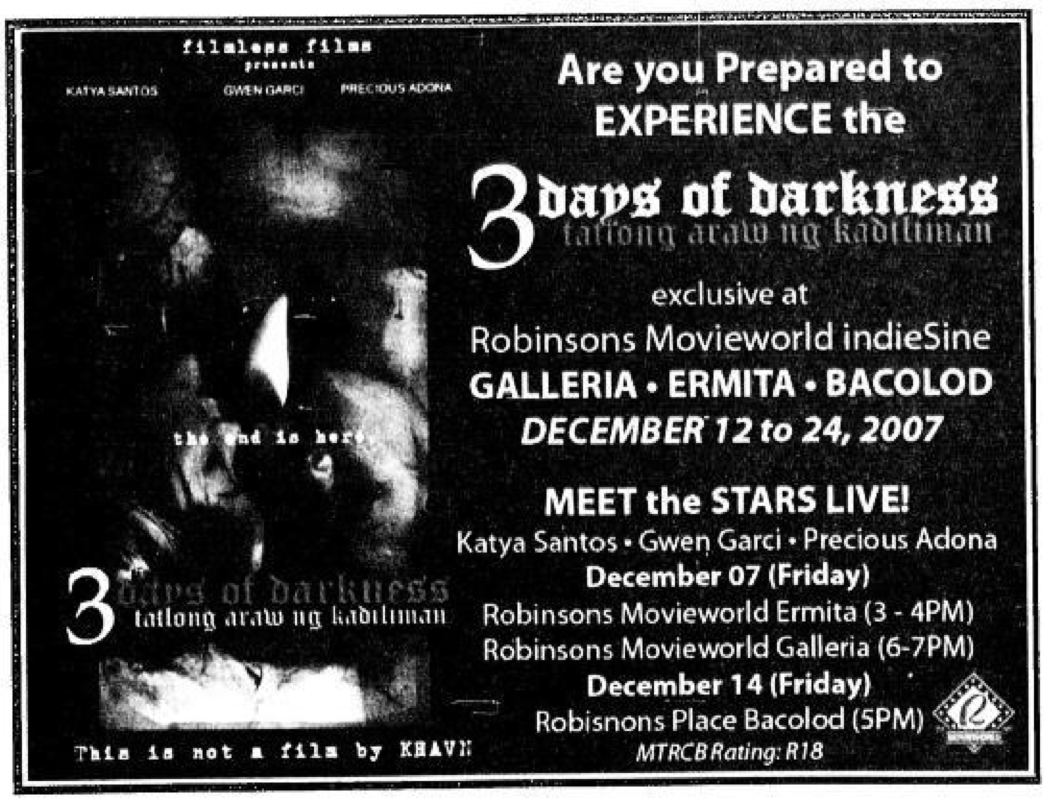
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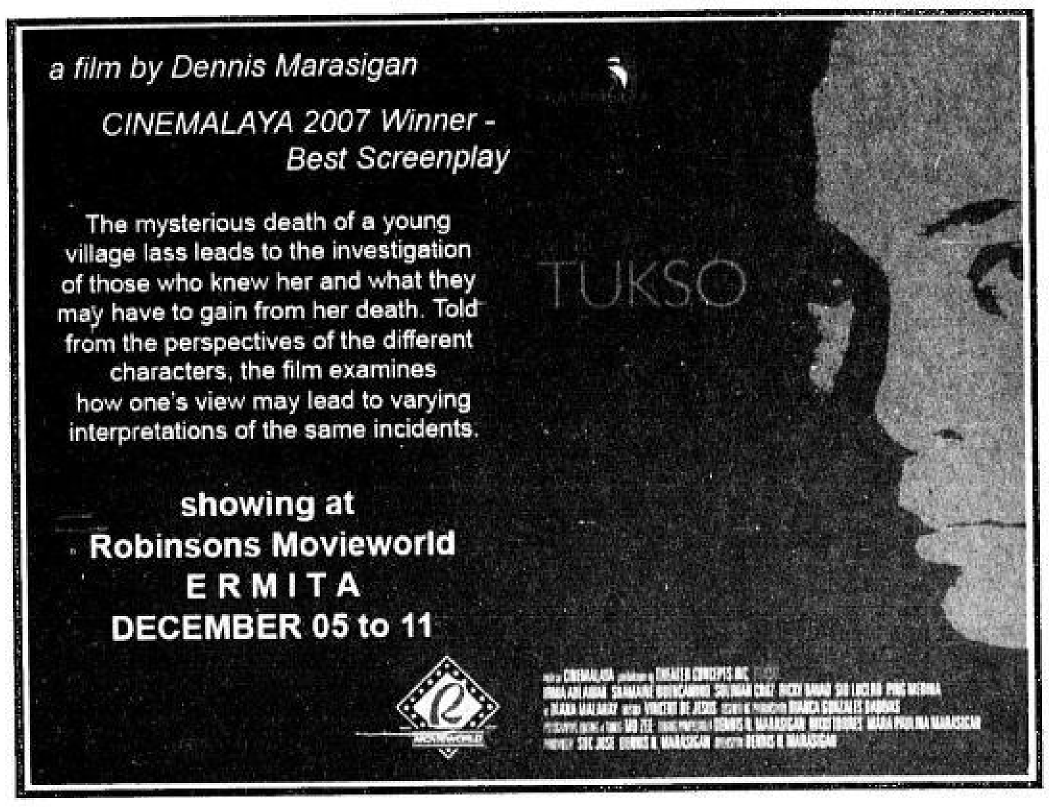
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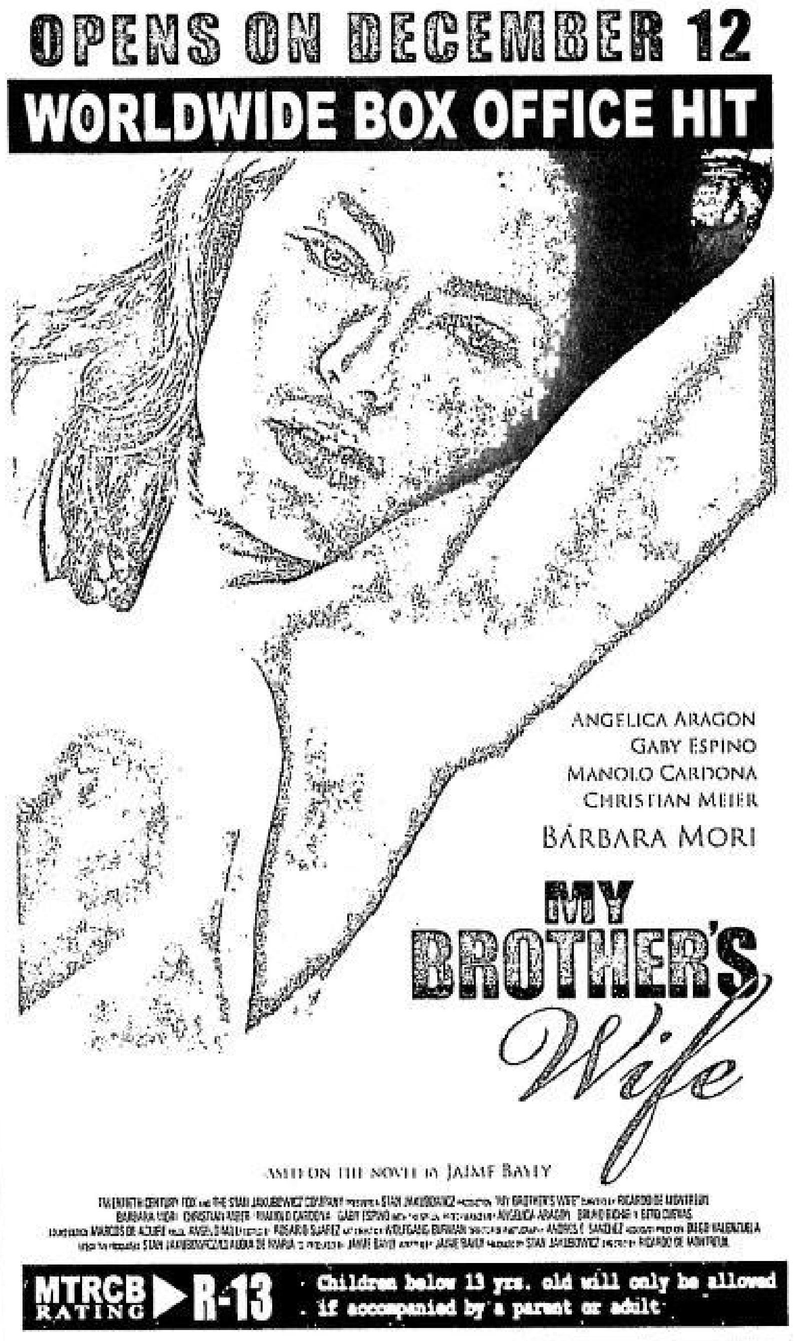
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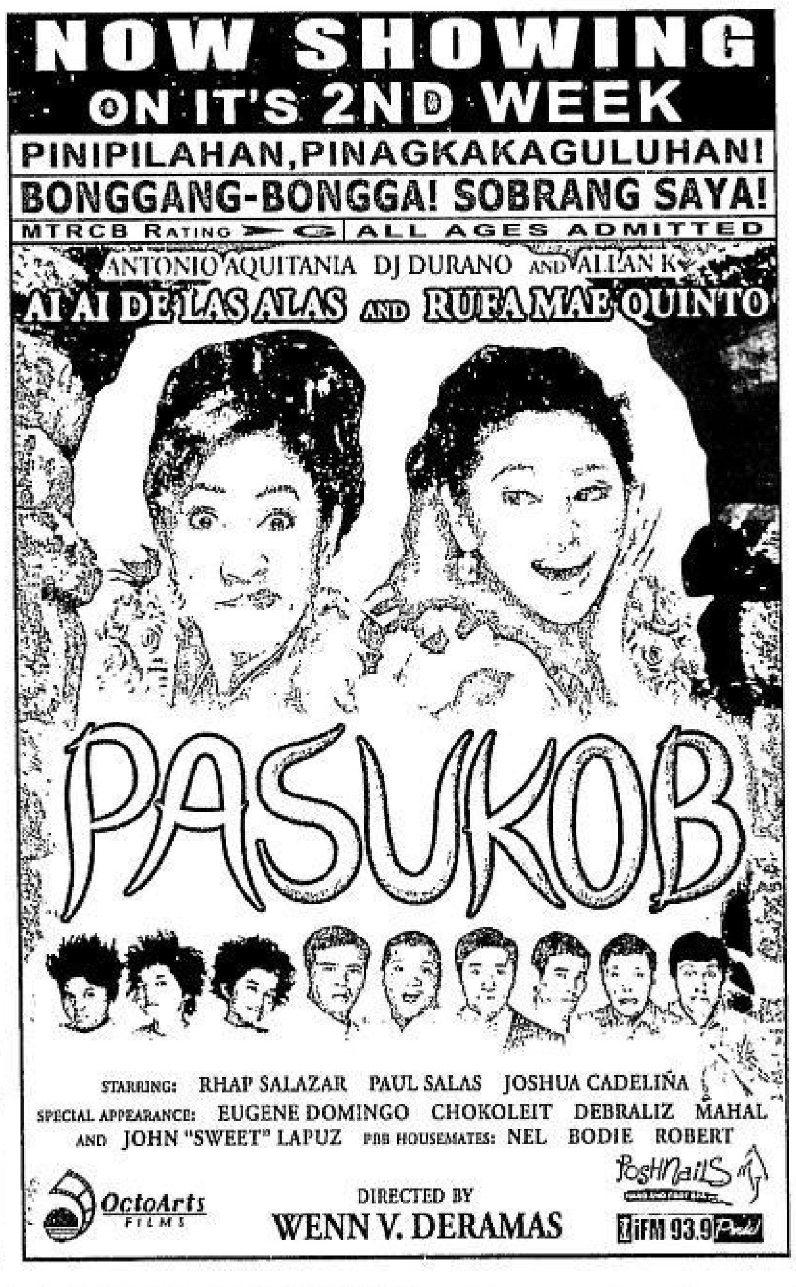
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'Ciento Comico'

Alumni say sense of freedom in State U helps it produce top comedians

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IS IT THE WATER?

What is it about the University of the Philippines that has allowed it to produce some of the best comics in the country?

Lawyer Gari Tiongco, president of the UP Alumni Association (UPAA), and filmmaker Maryo J. de los Reyes, himself a UP graduate, agree that it's the "sense of freedom" in the State University.

"We make fun of everything, even the authorities," says De los Reyes. Sounds like the eternal rebel in each "Iskolar ng Bayan."

"We joke about *colegialas*. We lampoon professors. We spoof school officials," explains Tiongco. "There are no sacred cows."

"We make fun even of the Oblation [a sculpture that represents nationalism and an iconic symbol of UP]," De los Reyes adds.

In short, since UP is a "marketplace of ideas," it seems inevitable that it would produce a variety of artists.

"A UP student meets all sorts—from the smart to the stupid, from the rich to the poor, from the *sosyal* to the *jologs*," De los Reyes says.

"We've produced the best singers, composers, directors, performers," Tiongco notes.

Three shows

When time came to celebrate the State University's centennial anniversary (from December 2007 to December 2008), the UPAA leadership thought of gathering its most outstanding alumni from different fields.

"We're mounting three centennial shows: a 'Night of Chorale Groups,' 'A Night of Musicians' and a 'Night of Comedy,'" Tiongco says.

First in line is the "Night of Comedy," dubbed "Ciento Comico"—100 years of laughter.

"It will be a showcase of the best comedians that the university has produced," Tiongco says of the comedy revue, set on Dec. 17 at the UP Theater.

Among the alumni starring in the show are: Willie Nepomuceno, Tessie Tomas, Nanette Inventor, Candy Pangilinan, Roderick Paulate, Eugene Domingo, and RS Francisco.

"The stand-up comics will do the characters they're most famous for," says De los Reyes. "Willie Nep is doing Erap; Tessie, Meldita; Nanette, Doña Buding; and Candy, GMA."

De los Reyes reveals that the school's award-winning cheering team, the UP Pep Squad, is also making a special appearance, along with its wacky new recruits to be played by Domingo and Paulate.

'Mighty' challenge

Theater actor Francisco is set to do his Baby Baby Cojuangkers character. "Baby Baby teaches Socialization: How to be a good socialite," De los Reyes says, chortling.

Although putting these comic stars together is a "mighty challenge," De los Reyes admits that his job as director is made a bit easier because the entire cast is thoroughly professional.

"They take their work seriously. For them, comedy is a craft," De los Reyes says, adding that in these troubling times of political upheavals and controversies, comedy is truly the perfect relief.

"Ciento Comico" kicks off the yearlong celebration of the UP centennial and, a day after the show, the Carillon will have a test ringing of its new bells donated by the UPAA, before its grand relaunch on Jan. 8.

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CLOCKWISE, from below right, Willie Nepumuceno, Tessie Tomas, Maryo delos Reyes

Vic on Oyo's new 'romance': He'd tell me if it was serious

By Marinel R. Cruz

ASKED ABOUT THE RUMORED ROMANCE between his son Oyo Boy and actress Kristine Hermosa, comedian Vic Sotto said he was sure "there's nothing serious."

Oyo would tell him, if there were, Vic said during a press conference for "Enteng Kabisote 4," where he co-stars with the two young stars. It is Octo-Arts Films/M-Zet Productions' entry to the forthcoming Metro Manila Film Festival.

Oyo split up with Angel Locsin in February 2007. He and Kristine have been seen in public together, but even her former long-time boyfriend, Diether Ocampo, said in an interview in April: "Hanging out with guys is not unusual for Tin (her nickname)."

Vic volunteered that it was while working on the "Kabisote" series that Oyo and Kristine became buddies. "'Enteng 1' *pa lang, dabarkads na kami* (we were a troupe). How close they are now is the result of years of working together."

Had he ever asked his son about this rumor? "I respect Oyo's decision to keep to himself certain things about his life," said Vic. "But I don't mind if he ends up with Kristine."

As for his pregnant daughter Danica, Vic said he was very excited about becoming a grandfather for the first time. "I was worried for a while about Danica," he said. "Her doctor ordered a two-week bed rest for her earlier. I think she's okay now."

Vic added that Danica stayed with him one weekend when husband, basketball player Marc Pingris, was away for a game.

"I'm ready to become a *lolo*," he said. "I think I will be called *Tatay*—that's how my kids called their grandfathers."

"Enteng Kabisote 4: Okay Ka, Fairy Ko (The Beginning of a Legend)" is a prequel to the first three "Enteng" movies.

Vic said he is open to doing "Enteng 5" or even "Enteng 10" if they could come up with a better production.

In the works is a movie that will star Vic with the Comedy King Dolphy. "We're in pre-production. We don't know yet who the other cast members will be. Shooting starts in January."

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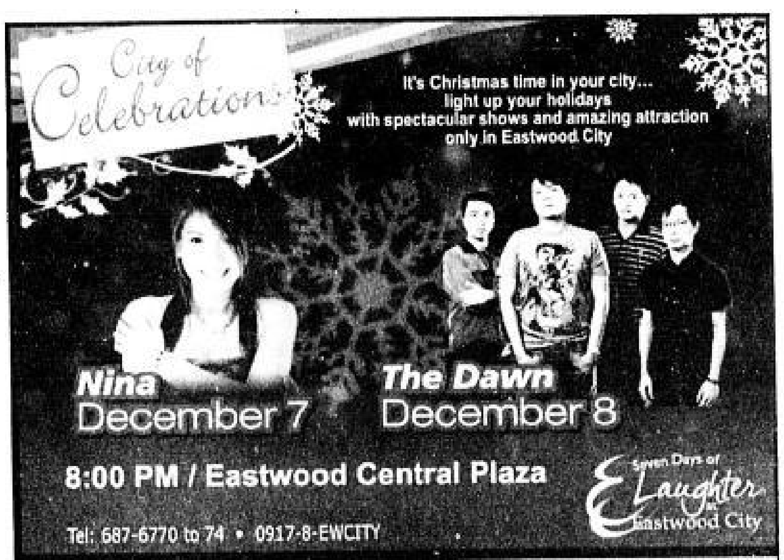

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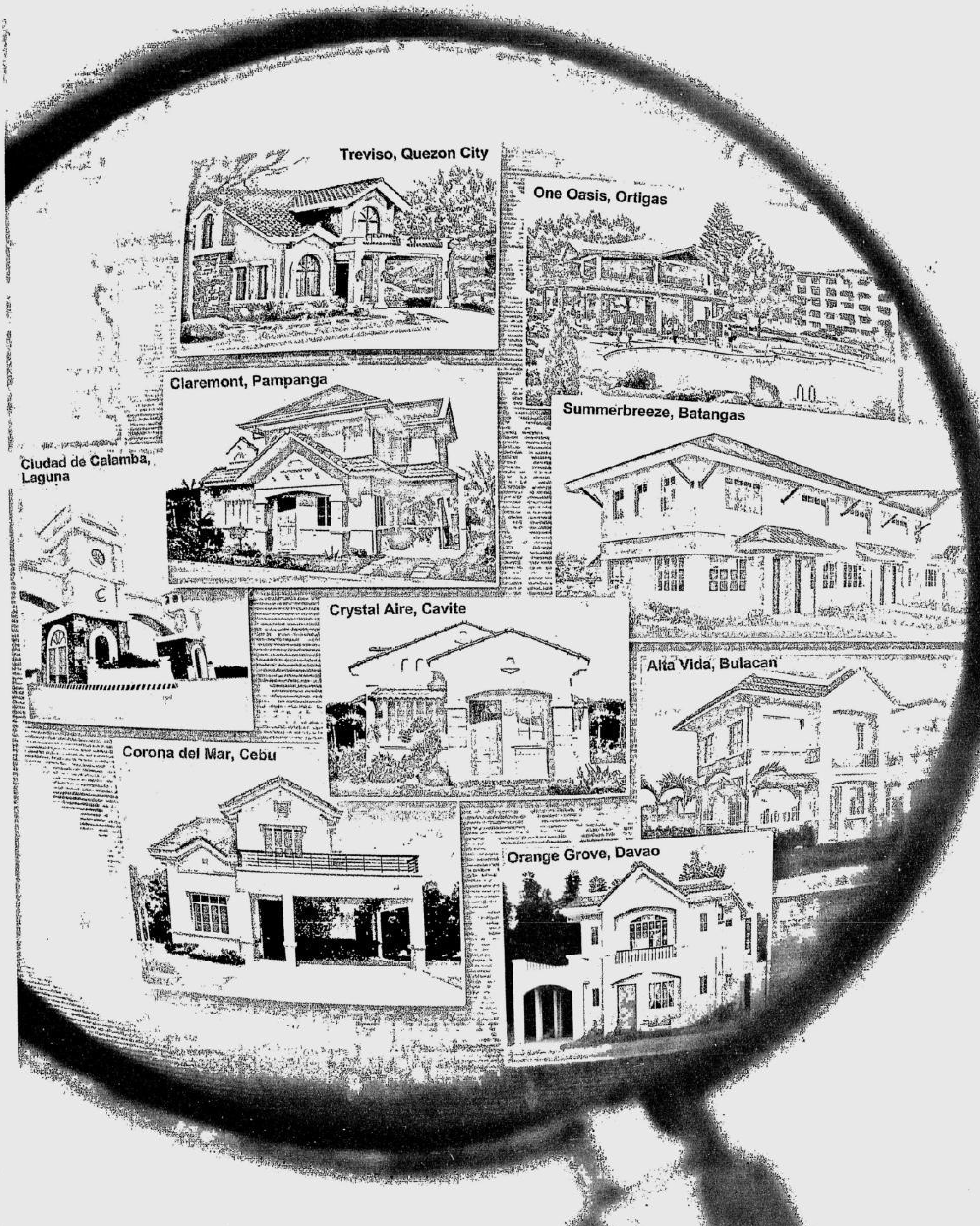
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A 'Golden' controversy

Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig and their 'anti-Christian' movie

By Ruben V. Nepales
Los Angeles Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—IS "THE GOLDEN COMPASS," the new epic fantasy adventure starring Daniel Craig (the new James Bond) and Nicole Kidman, anti-Christian?

In a controversy reminiscent of the fuss that hounded "The Da Vinci Code," the special effects-laden, $180 million movie is the object of a boycott call by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights and some Christian groups in the US.

(See reader's view. Feedback, page 16.)

This worries New Line Cinema, which hopes that the visually spectacular movie will be the

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The Hajj, from a pilmgrim's viewpoint

THE INTRICATE PLANNING AND logistics involved in executing a pilgrimage of mammoth proportions is showcased in Discovery Channel's "Revealed: The Hajj."

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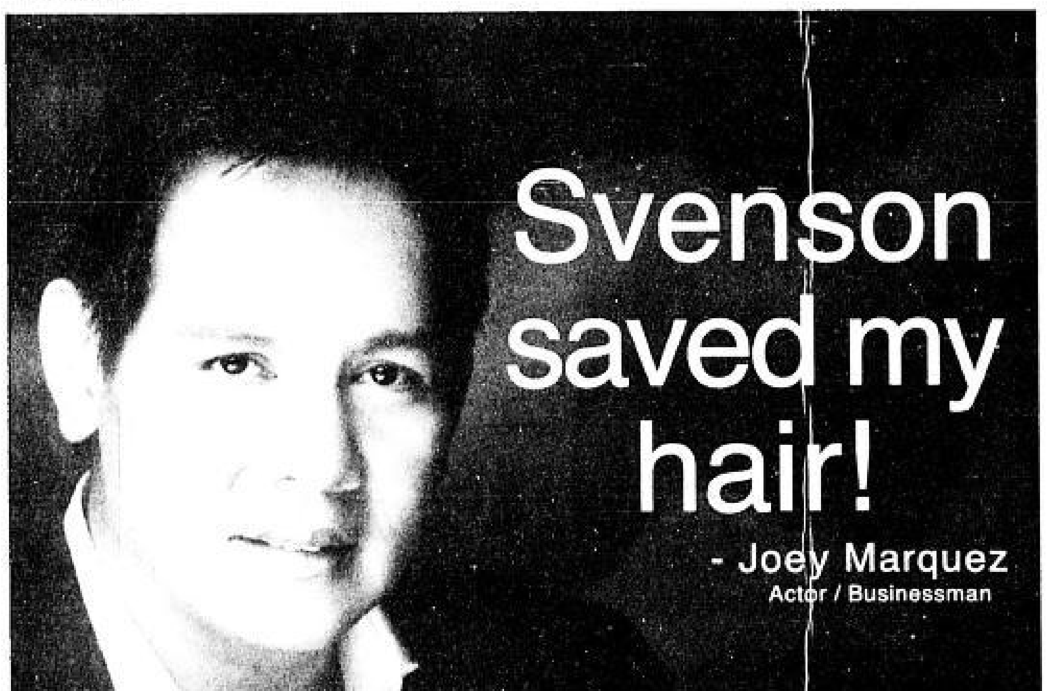
The Hajj to Mecca, one of the greatest religious gatherings, is the fifth requirement in the Five Pillars of Sunni Islam, which stipulates that every able-bodied Muslim with the financial capability should complete this pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime.

Viewers will see the proceedings from a pilgrim's point of view through the eyes of Australian Matthew Nelson, a recent convert to Islam who embarks on his first Hajj.

It provides a first look at the very latest crowd dynamics and surveillance technologies such as advance logistics software to help ensure efficiency and safety.

The journey premieres Dec. 16 at 9 p.m., with replays on Dec. 17, 12 midnight, 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., Dec. 22 at 2 p.m. and Dec. 23 at 8 a.m.



For funnyman Joey Marquez, hairloss isn't something to laugh about. "I started losing my hair when I was about 35 years old," he recalls. "I was being called 'monsignor' because the bald spot on my head was increasing to the size of a monsignor's cap! You look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old! But I didn't want to wear a wig either. With the Svenson treatments, I got back my real, natural hair! It was thicker and healthier. It made me look absolutely younger! Svenson saved me from hairloss!"

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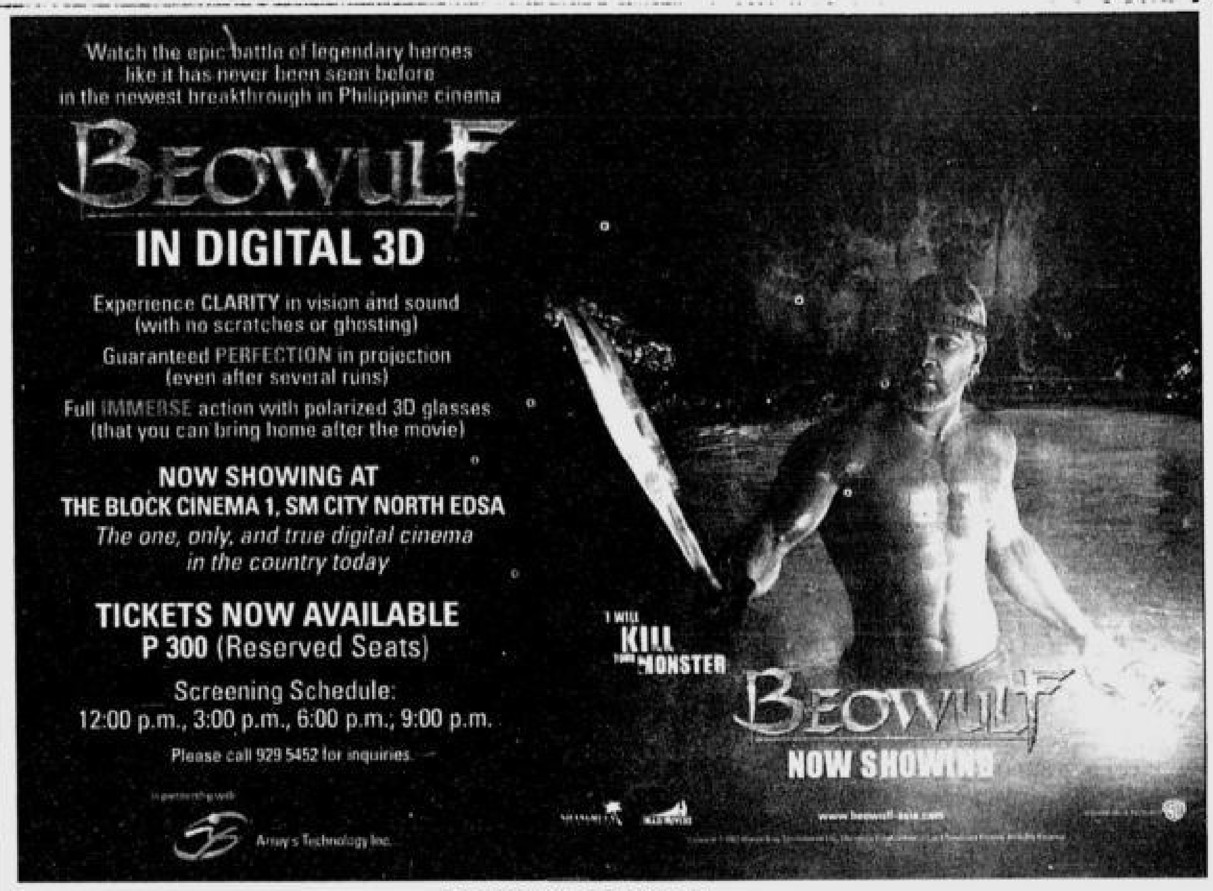

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3 ENCHANTED/ PASUKOB
4 HITMAN

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 THE GAME PLAN
2 BATANES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
5 ENCHANTED
6 THE KINGDOM
7 RESERVED
8 PASUKOB

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 THE NANNY DIARIES
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
6 BATANES
7 PASUKOB
8 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010

1 THE GAME PLAN
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 PASUKOB

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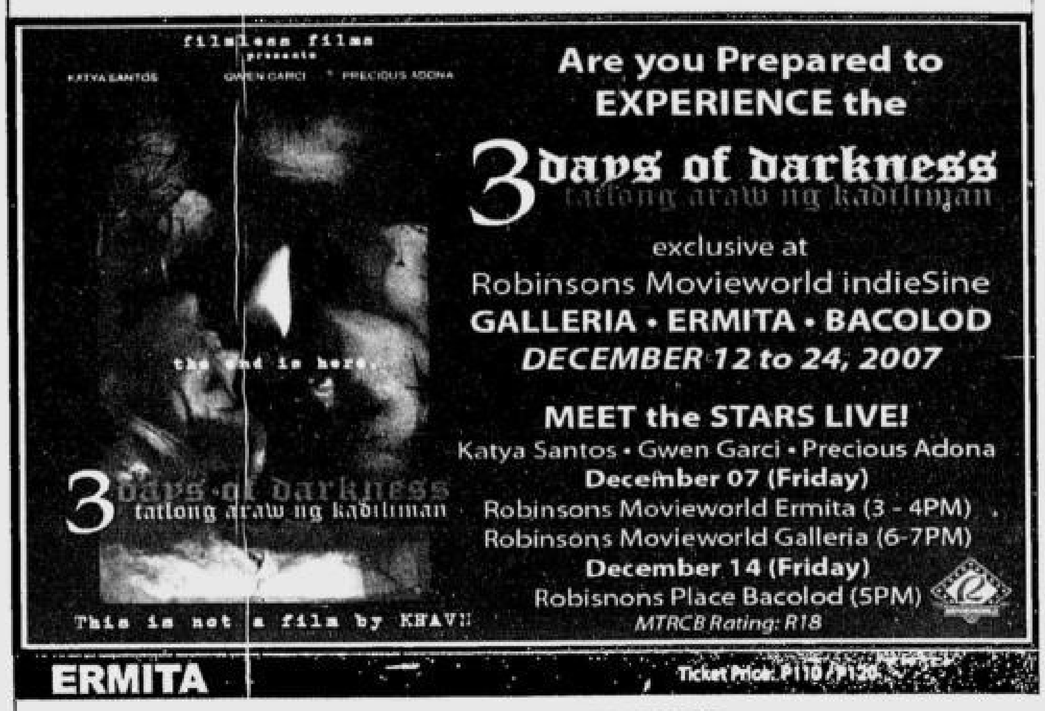
GALLERIA

Ticket Price THX: P160 130 Indie Sine: 130 632-9116

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS • THX
2 THE GLDEN COMPASS
3 indieSine: KONTRA AGOS
4 THE KINGDOM
5 BATANES
6 EASTERN PROMISES
7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
8 PASUKOB
9 HITMAN / BEOWULF
10 ENCHANTED THE KINGDOM


filmless films presents
KATYA SANTOS GWEN GARCI PRECIOUS ADONA
the end is here.
3 days of darkness
tatlong araw ng kadiliman
This is not a film by KHAVN

Are you Prepared to
EXPERIENCE the
3 days of darkness
tatlong araw ng kadiliman
exclusive at
Robinsons Movieworld indieSine
GALLERIA • ERMITA • BACOLOD
DECEMBER 12 to 24, 2007

MEET the STARS LIVE!
Katya Santos • Gwen Garci • Precious Adona
December 07 (Friday)
Robinsons Movieworld Ermita (3 - 4PM)
Robinsons Movieworld Galleria (6-7PM)
December 14 (Friday)
Robisnons Place Bacolod (5PM)
MTRCB Rating: R18

ERMITA

Ticket Price: P110 / P120

1 THE KINGDOM
2 indieSine: TUKSO
3 BATANES
4 EASTERN PROMISES
5 HITMAN / BEOWULF
6 PASUKOB
7 ONE MORE CHANCE

Midtown

1 ENCHANTED
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS

The mysterious death of a young village lass leads to the investigation of those who knew her and what they may have to gain from her death. Told from the perspectives of the different characters, the film examines how one's view may lead to varying interpretations of the same incidents.

showing at Robinsons Movieworld ERMITA
DECEMBER 05 to 11

METRO EAST

Ticket Price: P100 / P110 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 THE KINGDOM
4 BATANES
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 PASUKOB
7 ENCHANTED
8 HITMAN / BEOWULF

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price: P90 / P100 936-3231 / 936-3229-30

1 BATANES
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB

PIONEER

Ticket Price: P100 / P110 687-6378

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3 BATANES
4 PASUKOB / EASTERN PROMISES

STA. ROSA

Ticket Price: P80 / P90
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1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4 PASUKOB / HITMAN / GAME PLAN

LIPA

Ticket Price: (043) 757-3664
P 90 (043) 312-5870

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2 BATANES
3 GAME PLAN
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

DASMARIÑAS

Ticket Price: P80 / P90
(046) 416-4332

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 HITMAN
4 PASUKOB

IMUS

Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 PASUKOB
4 THE KINGDOM

ANGELES

Ticket Price: P 90 / P95
(045) 892-2348

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 GAME PLAN
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

TARLAC

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BATANES BEOWULF

STARMILLS

Ticket Price: P80 / P90 (045) 875-1927

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 GAME PLAN
4 PASUKOB
5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

BACOLOD

Ticket Price: P70
(034) 441-0459

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS
5 GAME PLAN
6 indieSine: HILO

ILOILO

Ticket Price: P70.50 / P80.50
(033) 336-8070

1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2 BATANES
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 GAME PLAN
5 ENCHANTED
6 BEOWULF

Pictures of the Year

BEYONCE IN JAPAN. Reuters News Pictures Service has picked its Pictures of the Year 2007. One of them is this snap of Beyonce Knowles during her concert in Nagoya, central Japan, last April 14.

HASTY PUDDING AWARDEE. Another RNPS pick is this one of Scarlett Johansson with two officials of Harvard University's Hasty Pudding Theatricals as they named her Woman of the Year, in February.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41
DOLBY DIGITAL

FRED CLAUS G	THE GOLDEN COMPASS	ENCHANTED G
THE KINGDOM R13	EASTERN PROMISES R13	THE GOLDEN COMPASS

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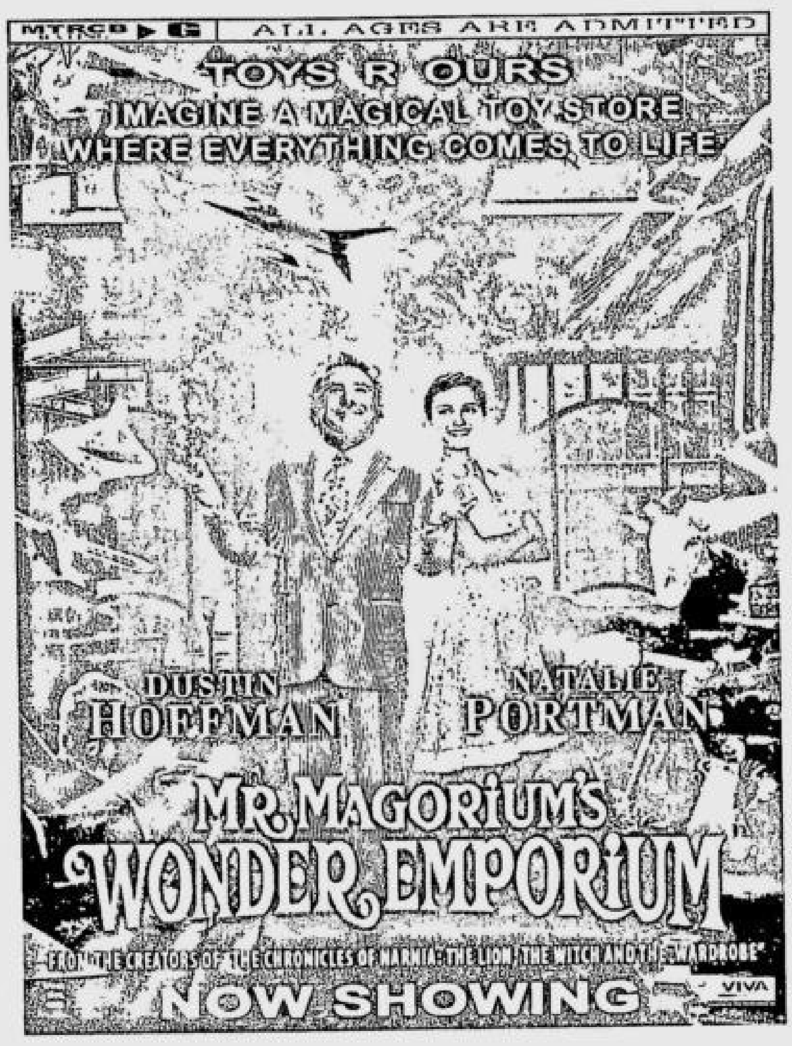
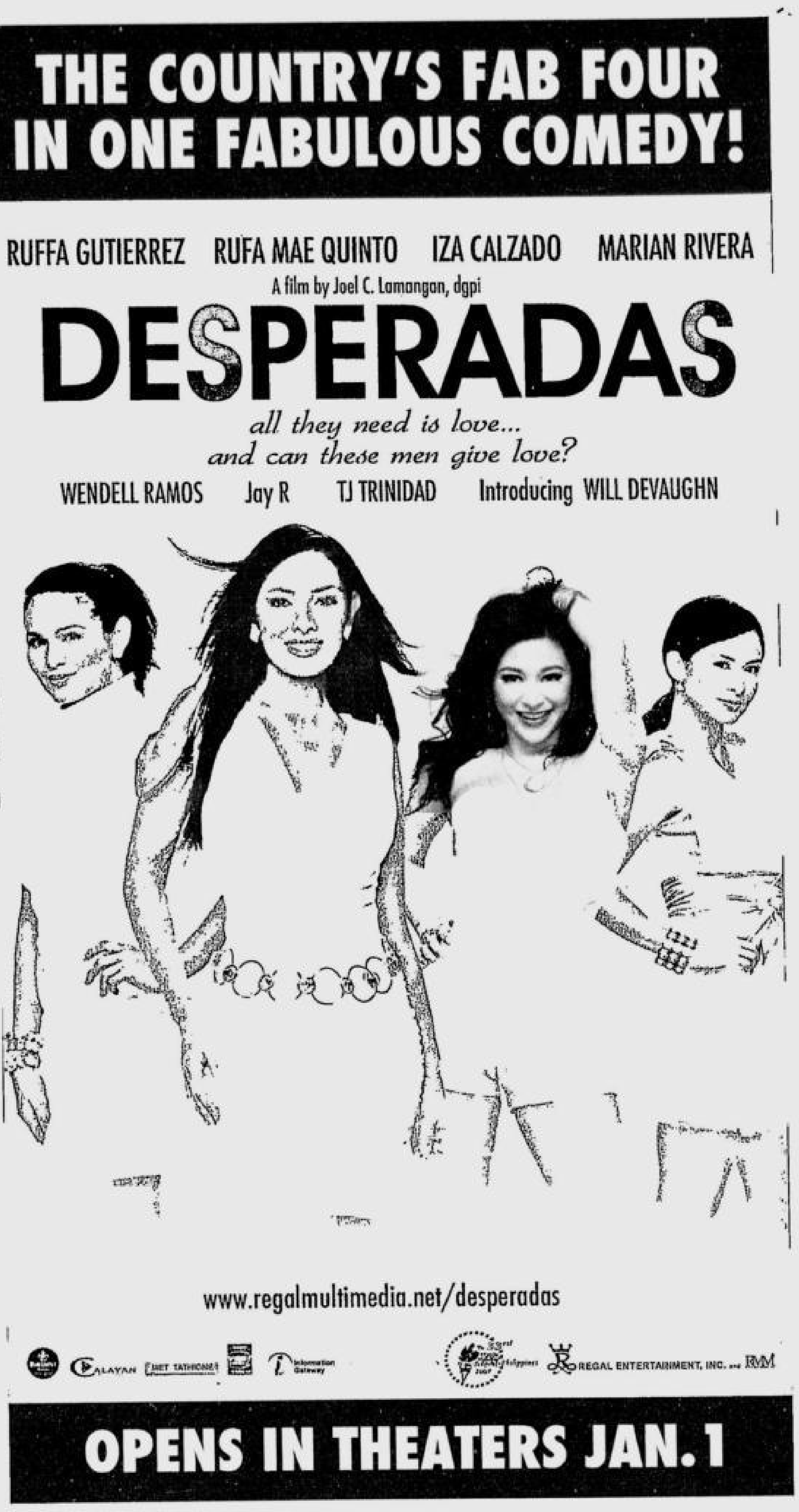


MTRCB G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED
TOYS R OURS
IMAGINE A MAGICAL TOY STORE WHERE EVERYTHING COMES TO LIFE
DUSTIN HOFFMAN NATALIE PORTMAN
MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
FROM THE CREATORS OF THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE
NOW SHOWING
VIVA



THE COUNTRY'S FAB FOUR IN ONE FABULOUS COMEDY!
RUFFA GUTIERREZ RUFA MAE QUINTO IZA CALZADO MARIAN RIVERA
A film by Joel C. Lamangan, dgpi
DESPERADAS
all they need is love...
and can these men give love?
WENDELL RAMOS Jay R TJ TRINIDAD Introducing WILL DEVAUGHN
www.regalmultimedia.net/desperadas
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AT THE CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS G83 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

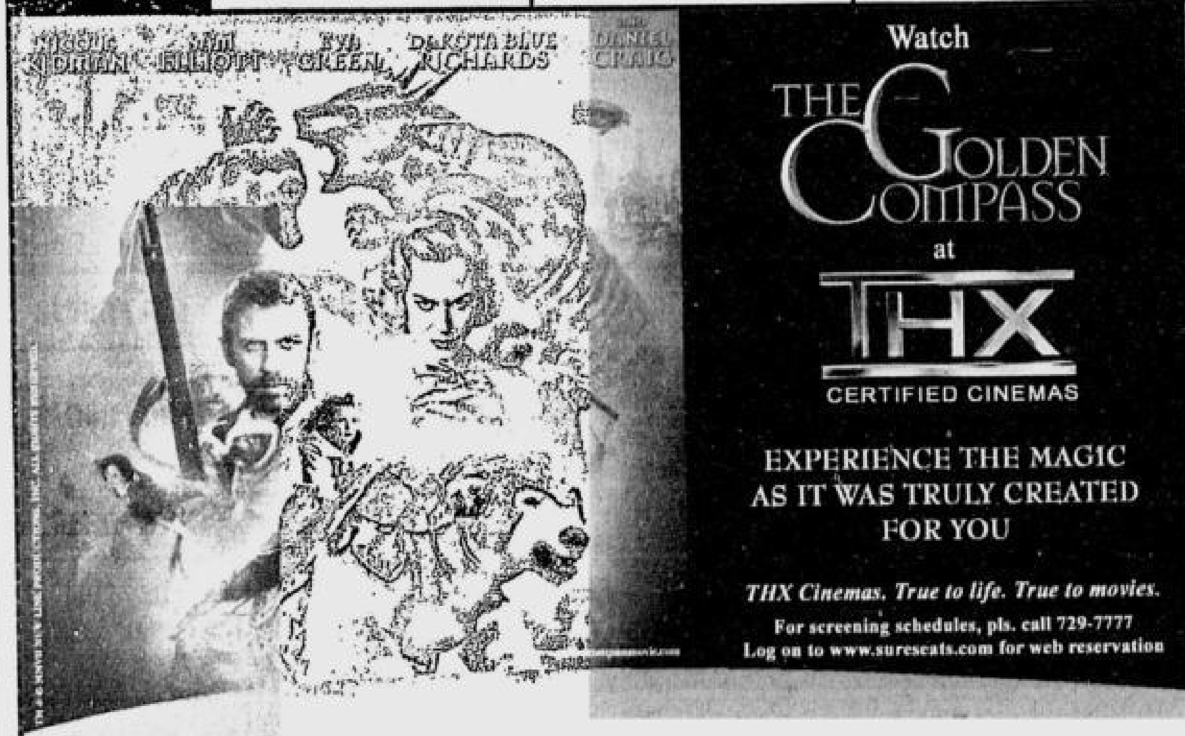
GLORIETTA 1	1 ONE MORE CHANCE	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 BATANES	4 PASUKOB
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE NAMESAKE	5 THE HITMAN	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 GONE BABY GONE
GREENBELT 1	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		
GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 GONE BABY GONE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 EASTERN PROMISE GUARANTEED SEATS	5 FRED CLAUS GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE KINGDOM		
	3 EASTERN PROMISES	4 ENCHANTED	5 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT	3 THE NANNY DIARIES	4 THE KINGDOM
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE KINGDOM		
	3 ONE MORE CHANCE	4 BATANES	5 PASUKOB	
TRINOMA • THX Certified • All-Digital Sound • All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	1 BATANES	2 ONE MORE CHANCE	3 THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 EASTERN PROMISES GUARANTEED SEATS
	5 ENCHANTED	6 THE KINGDOM	7 THX THE GOLDEN COMPASS GUARANTEED SEATS	

AT THE MALLS

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta	Philippine Madrigal Singers with Robert Seña and Isay Alvarez December 8; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park
GREENBELT	The Dawn Jazz Nights December 5; 7:30pm; Greenbelt 2 Al Fresco Area
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Southern Musicians Concert December 9; 5pm; Town Plaza
AYALA CENTER CEBU	FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-Cebu Permit No. 584, Series of 2007 December 1 to 31
MARKET! MARKET!	Christmas Shoes: A Christmas Musicale December 6; 7pm; Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF November 9 - December 16, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	Christmas Chorale featuring Martin Nievera December 6; 6pm; Activity Center Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks December 9; 6pm; Activity Center



NICOLE KIDMAN SAM ELLIOTT EVA GREEN DAKOTA BLUE RICHARDS DANIEL CRAIG
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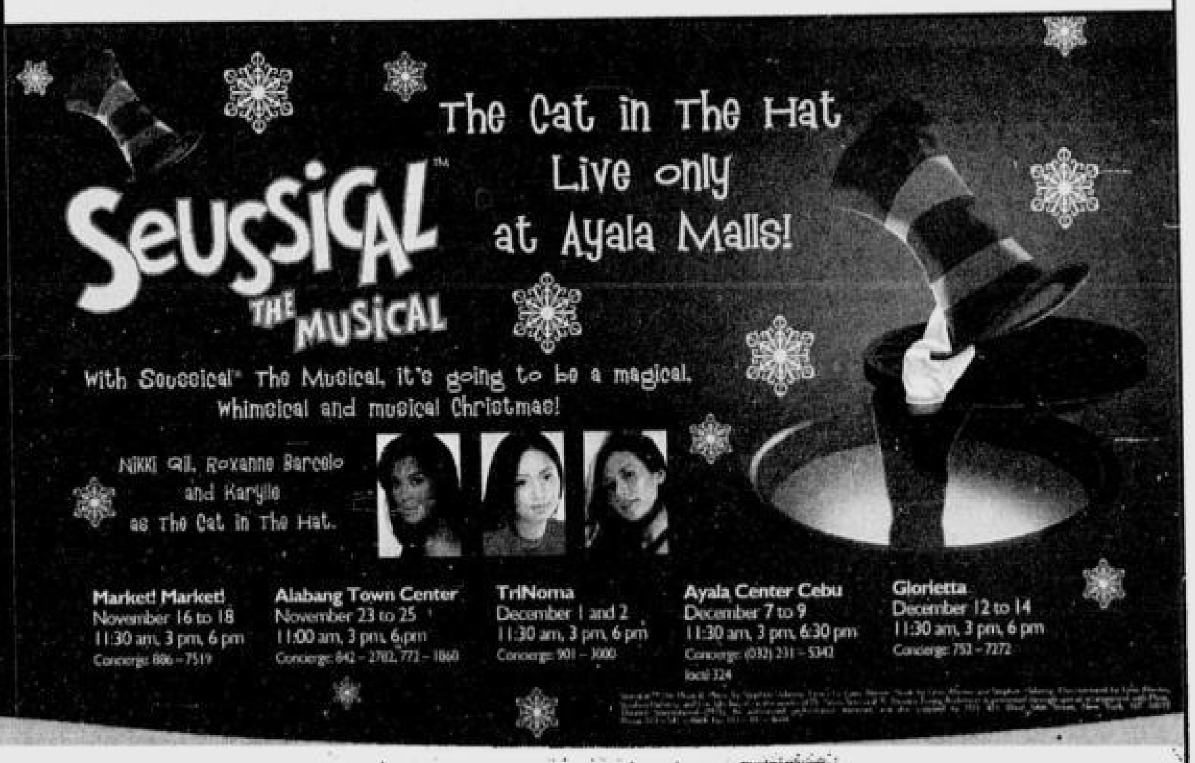


SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL
The Cat in The Hat
Live only
at Ayala Malls!
With Seussical The Musical, it's going to be a magical, whimsical and musical Christmas!
Nikki Gil, Roxanne Barcelo and Karylle as The Cat in The Hat.
Market! Market!
November 16 to 18
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 886-7519
Alabang Town Center
November 23 to 25
11:00 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 842-2782, 772-1860
TriNoma
December 1 and 2
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 901-3000
Ayala Center Cebu
December 7 to 9
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6:30 pm
Concierge: (032) 231-5342 local 324
Glorietta
December 12 to 14
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 752-7272
glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
ENTERTAINME

No room for gay lover

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

A FORMER MATINEE IDOL told me this funny story that happened during an out-of-town show: "*Napa-atras ako* when I entered the hotel room. Room mate *ko* was a singer who's rumored to be gay. I got nervous because a sexy star told me that *may* crush *sa akin* that singer. *Parang na*-confirm my doubts when I saw him *nakadapa sa* bed and he was swinging his legs up and down nonstop while he was on the phone. That's not a guy movement at all! *Nagpalipat ako agad ng* room!"

The actor has no room for a gay lover in his life.

'Diva-licious!'

Concert Queen **Pops Fernandez** is all set to outdo herself in "Diva-licious!" on Dec. 8, 8 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum. It's her birthday and silver anniversary concert. The song she dedicates to her sons **Robin** and **Ram**? Jim Brickman's "The Gift."

Pipay and I became friends when she was just starting out in show biz. So we are also celebrating 25 years of friendship and sisterhood.

It's been our longtime dream to have a magazine show with our close friends **Liezl Martinez** and **Princess Punzalan**. Our lives have so many parallelisms. If you all got shocked with Pipay's tell-all mag interview, be prepared to be stunned in "Diva-licious!" as she gives it her all.

For tickets, call 911-5555.

Glorious mystery

Gloria Diaz says one of the lessons her movie "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo" imparts is to compromise with your partner and in-laws to solve disagreements. Doesn't she feel the need to get married again?

"Why fix what ain't broken?," she quips. "The secret to my 10-year relationship with Mike (de Jesus) is that we don't live together so there's always an element of mystery."

Love is truly one glorious mystery for La Gloria!

Sizzling Aga

Aga Muhlach will start shooting his movie with **Anne Curtis** in Boracay soon. Heard that he will show more skin in the flick. After he wowed the audience in his sexy scenes in "A Love Story," Ags is ready to sizzle even more.

Sweet couple

Kristine Hermosa and **Oyo Boy Sotto** were spotted being sweety-sweety in Teriyaki Boy-Katipunan.

Is love now on their menu? Were they each other's dessert?

'Katas ng Saudi'

Maverick Films' "Katas ng Saudi" may well be called The Filipino family film. It captures the plight of the contemporary Pinoy family, with the head working abroad to provide the children a brighter future. It stars **Jinggoy Estrada**, **Lorna Tolentino**, **Shaina Magdayao**, **Arron Villaflor** and my *inaanak*, **Julian Estrada** (Jinggoy's cute son).

I asked Lorna what job would she try if she were an OFW. "Chef or a caregiver in the US or Canada," she says. She's the best caregiver to hubby **Rudy**. That's why Daboy is winning his battle with the Big C.

New passion

McDonald's top honcho **George Yang** has discovered his new passion: classical music. He has released his first album, "Always Yang: Timeless Songs" (Universal Records).

It has 16 tracks of Broadway and classical songs, 11 of which are Italian staples like "O Sole Mio" and "Senza Catene," another version of "Unchained Melody."

Just like the burgers in his fast-food chain, Mr. Yang's album has everything on it!

Birthday bash

I had a blast at the birthday bash of my fave band's (True Faith) vocalist **Medwin Marfil** at 19 East. He has all the reasons to celebrate because the band has released their 12th CD—a "Greatest Hits" album (EMI). Its timeless songs "Perfect" and "Wag Na Lang Kaya" remain to be the national anthems of music buffs of all ages.

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.

SHAMAINE Buencamino, Best Actress, "Prinsesa"

ERMIE Concepcion, Best Supporting Actress, "Prinsesa"

Great night for first-timers

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

JERROLD TAROG AND RUEL DAHIS Antipuesto's "Confessional," a dark comedy about a small-time filmmaker who gets to extract a life-changing confession from a retired politician, romped away with the most awards from Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival on Saturday night.

"Confessional" bagged the Best Picture trophy for being "a social construction of reality—when even lies are seen as truth." The film also got a P200,000 cash prize and P30,000 worth of gift packs.

Intimate film

The five-member jury describes "Confessional" as "an intimate film ... elevated into [a social commentary]."

The jury members were: Grace Javier Alfonso, vice chair of the Manunuri ng Pelikulang Pilipino, commissioner of the Quezon City Film Commission and chancellor of the UP Open University; Manet Dayrit, managing director and senior editor of RoadRunner Network; Olive Lamasan, filmmaker and senior vice president of creative of ABS-CBN's Star Cinema; Lav Diaz, filmmaker; and Cesar Montano, actor, producer, filmmaker and the Philippine commissioner for culture and arts of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

"Confessional" likewise won the Star Cinema Award and a cash prize of P100,000 for "innovative treatment that makes it different yet entertaining, for making us reflect on our own humanity."

For their work, first-time directors Tarog and Antipuesto were also named Best Directors. Tarog brought home two other awards—Best Sound and Best Screenplay.

PUBLIO Briones III, Best Supporting Actor, "Confessional"

LAWRENCE Fajardo directed "Prinsesa," recipient of the Audience Choice award.

Cebu-based Publio Briones III, a first-time thespian, received the Best Supporting Actor award, while Pats R. Mayo was given the Best Editing trophy, also for "Confessional."

Shamaine Buencamino was chosen Best Actress for her portrayal of Marie, a woman who takes care of her niece whose father works abroad, in "Prinsesa." Ermie Concepcion was named Best Supporting Actress also for her work on the film directed by Lawrence Fajardo.

"Prinsesa," which tackles parenthood, was likewise given the Audience Choice award. Sid Lucero won as Best Actor for his role as the street urchin Pablo in Adolf Alix Jr.'s "Tambolista," a tale of two brothers' struggle with deprivation. The Best Musical Score award was handed to Malek Lopez for his work on Rico Maria Ilarde's horror flick, "Altar."

Guests, presenters

Baba and Vilma Velasco brought home the Best Production Design award for "Maling Akala," the Pablong Biglang-awa Jr. and Vernonica Velasco film that tackles homosexuality. Larry Manda was awarded Best Cinematographer, also for "Maling Akala."

Ryan Eigenmann and Heart Evangelista hosted the awards night at the Renaissance Hotel in Makati. Guest performers were Ogie Alcasid, Rachelle Ann Go and Christian Bautista. Presenters included Kim Chiu, Gerald Anderson, Irma Adlawan, Ping Medina, Rafael Rosel and Regine Angeles.

A 'Golden' controversy

From page I1

blockbuster movie during the holidays and will launch another successful franchise similar to its previous effort, "The Lord of the Rings" series.

"The Golden Compass," the first book in Philip Pullman's best-selling trilogy, "His Dark Materials" ("Northern Lights" in the UK), is set in a parallel universe that is reminiscent of Oxford, England. In this world, the humans are accompanied everywhere by their "daemons," their souls and conscience that are in the shape of animals. Twelve-year-old Lyra Belacqua (Dakota Blue Richards), who lives as a ward of Jordan College, overhears her uncle, Lord Asriel (Craig) talking about Dust, a mysterious element that is a crucial element in the story.

The story

Lord Asriel is embarking on an expedition to the Arctic Circle to find this mysterious component called Dust. But the powerful Magisterium is doing everything to stop him. (The Catholic Church's sacred teaching authority is called the Magisterium.) Lyra has the last existing "alethiometer," or Golden Compass, a device that tells the truth, reveals what others wish to hide, foreshadows and changes the future.

Hidden motive

When her pal, Roger, becomes one of the children who have mysteriously disappeared, Lyra vows to search for him. When Lyra is charmed by Marisa Coulter (Nicole Kidman), she sees the scientist and world traveler as her chance to get away to rescue Roger. She is unaware that Marissa's hidden motive is to take the Golden Compass from her and give it to the Magisterium.

Lyra's adventure takes her on a journey where she meets a seafaring tribe, a witch (Eva Green, Bond Girl in "Casino Royale"), a Texan airman (Sam Elliott) and a great armored bear (voiced by the great Ian McKellen) who becomes her ally in a grand battle.

The Christian groups' main criticism is that Pullman's trilogy of books, which have sold over 14 million copies since 1995, attacks religion and promotes atheism. The award-winning British author has described himself in various interviews as either an atheist or an agnostic, but recently, he has been quoted as saying that he is "a religious man" because he is "preoccupied by the questions religion is preoccupied with." The trilogy climaxes with a quest to kill God in "The Amber Glass."

William A. Donohue, president of the conservative Catholic League, has condemned "The Golden Compass" (the second and third films are planned) mainly on the concern that the movie will "seduce" people, especially children, into buying the allegedly "anti-Christian" books. But Harry Forbes of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' Office for Film and Broadcasting wrote a positive review of the movie.

DAKOTA Blue Richards plays the young heroine, here shown with an ally, a great armored bear.

Donohue slammed the favorable article of Forbes, who wrote: "Whatever author Pullman's putative motives in writing the story, writer-director Chris Weitz's film, taken purely on its own cinematic terms, can be viewed as an exciting adventure story with, at its core, a traditional struggle between good and evil, and a generalized rejection of authoritarianism."

Literal reading

On the third book's depiction to kill God, Donna Freitas, a visiting assistant professor of religion at Boston University and co-author of "Killing the Imposter God: Philip Pullman's Spiritual Imagination in His Dark Materials," wrote in the Boston Globe: "The two child protagonists help to defeat the rule of the Authority and the Authority dies. When critics say that Pullman's series advocates killing God, this is what they mean. But that is the most literal possible reading, and misses the books' point. The 'God' who dies in 'The Amber Spyglass' is not a true God at all."

Freitas continues: "Pullman's Authority is an impostor, more like (John) Milton's Lucifer (in his poem, 'Paradise Lost') than like a traditional conception of God."

In a series of recent press cons held in London, this reporter asked the director and stars about the controversy.

Nicole Kidman, a Catholic who has been quoted as saying that she would not have committed to the movie, had she felt that it was against her religion, said: "I deal with it in relation to the movie. When you see it, I don't think it warrants the alarmist response."

On Pullman, she commented, "A lot of times, the author is not happy with the film adaptation of his book. We've got the opposite ... Philip just wrote me an extraordinary letter [thanking] us for the film. He said Mrs. Coulter (her character) onscreen was what he had imagined. That's a big thing for an actress to hear from the author who created her character."

> The book was pulled out from some school libraries after the author said he was an atheist

When Daniel Craig was asked about the Christian groups' fears that the movie will encourage children to read Pullman's books, he replied, "I hope so. Majority of the people who are criticizing the book haven't read them, and they haven't seen the film. I, for one, feel—this is a personal opinion but it's a very strong opinion—that if you read the books, they are actually books with very high morals about growing up."

Archaic censorship

Craig continued: "Within this book there's an authority that may or may not be religious. What this authority is doing is misusing its power. The book is about the fight against that. I don't see what's wrong with that picture."

Daniel disclosed, "I heard that somewhere in Canada, the book is being pulled off the shelves. This is a form of censorship that, to me, seems archaic." The actor was referring to AP reports that a Roman Catholic school board in Ontario, Canada ordered the "The Golden ..." book to be taken from the libraries of parochial schools after receiving a complaint about the author referring to himself as an atheist.

Daniel defended Pullman and his books: "What Philip Pullman has done so beautifully in these stories, as every great children's writer has done, is take a story about a young girl and her rite of passage—her struggles with the world—and thrown in very adult themes. Some of the premises of the books are phenomenal. For example, the idea of a daemon, a soul that walks next to you, that you wear on the outside, that stays with you until the day you die so that you never die alone, that's such a wonderful, beautiful idea."

Very spiritual

Eva Green chimed in: "I don't think the books are anti-Christian at all. They're very spiritual. It's more about an oppressive power that tries to control everybody's beliefs and stifle individuality. In the movie, the religion theme has been diluted a bit. But I think in the third movie, it will be about gods, good and evil angels, so we'll see how we deal with it. It will be a shame if people don't go and see the movie because they think it's anti-religion. The movie is about free will."

The director, Chris Weitz, said he was "saddened" by the controversy. He commented, "Although Philip Pullman takes issue with dogma, religion and God and abuse for political purposes, he's not anti-religion or anti-Christian. He's not an anti-Catholic author. The people who are starting this boycott are either misreading the books on purpose or accidentally. They're certainly criticizing a film they haven't seen yet, which is ironic because part of the film's message is to follow your own instincts as opposed to simply believing what you're told."

Why Lani Mercado didn't say 'I love you'

By the Inquirer and Inquirer.net Entertainment staff

Washington fetes H'wood

WASHINGTON—Washington's elite swayed to Motown and The Beach Boys as Hollywood descended on the capital on Sunday to pay tribute to five superstars who earned Kennedy Center Honors for lifetime contributions to the arts.

President George W. Bush and his wife, Laura, attended the gala performance to honor singer Diana Ross, comic-actor Steve Martin, film director Martin Scorsese, Beach Boys founder Brian Wilson and pianist Leon Fleisher. *Reuters*

Petty at Super Bowl

LOS ANGELES—Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers will play the coveted half-time slot at the Super Bowl in Arizona on Feb. 3, organizers of the year's No. 1 television event said on Sunday. This year, nearly 140 million Americans watched Prince play at the football extravaganza. Reuters

Metal heads to highbrow

LOS ANGELES—Sharon Osbourne and her Black Sabbath front man husband, Ozzy, raised more than $800,000 for charity after a heavy turnout for their Beverly Hills-style garage sale. Bidders ran the gamut from metal heads to the highbrow. Reuters

***

Top of the Talk Shows:

For those who missed the show biz gabfests on TV last weekend. (And why we are moved, if we are moved.)

•Rainier Castillo on his and Mark Herras' activities amid talk they were addicted to illegal drugs:

"*Nagbubuhat ako pagka walang* taping. *Tapos minsan pagka pareho kaming walang* work, *nagbubuhat kami.*" (Weights *siguro.*)

•Rainier, dared to take a drug test:

"*Gusto mo ngayon eh.*"

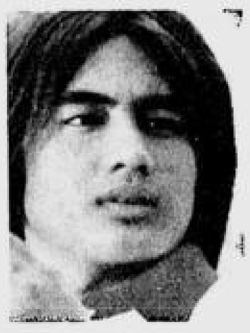
•Mark, corroborating Rainier's statement:

"*Walang kaso sa amin 'yun eh. Sila 'yung mga mahilig magpa-*issue *ng ganyan. Wala kaming pakialam sa kanila. Eh di sumama sila sa amin. Gusto mo mag-*stay *sila sa amin sa bahay para makita nila ang* schedule *ko sa trabaho. Di naman pariwara ang buhay ko para gumamit ng ganoon.*"

Almost paradise

•Paolo Paraiso on rumors he and Rhian Ramos kissed inside a car after a recent awards ceremony:

"*Totoo man o hindi, masama para kay* Rhian *'yan.* And since *hindi totoo, ako naman, bilang kapatid ni* Rhian *sa* Artist's Center, *gusto ko siyang protektahan. Sinasabi kong hindi po totoo yon.*" (In short, no.)



RAINIER Castillo

•Dr. Hayden Kho on an apparent friction with girlfriend Dr. Vicki Belo's children:

"I'm close to some of them, not all of them. Actually, *'yun ang* Christmas wish *ko*. I'd be the happiest person on Earth *kapag nagka-sundo-sundo kaming lahat.*" (In short, yes.)

•Bing Loyzaga on her ties with estranged husband Janno Gibbs:

"There are times *natutulog siya sa* room but that doesn't mean we are together. We're together sleeping but that doesn't mean okay *kami.*" (In short, maybe?)

DIANA Ross, a 2007 Kennedy Center Honoree, at the 30th annual awards. REUTERS

SINGER Fergie performs "Live & Let Die" during the taping of "Movies Rock" at the Kodak Theatre last Sunday. The two-hour special broadcasts on CBS Television on Dec. 7. REUTERS

•Kristine Hermosa on her rumored romance with Oyo Sotto:

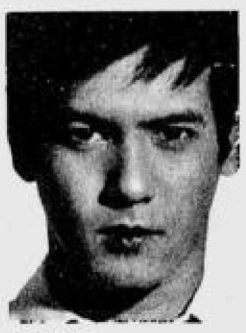
"*Mas magandang* foundation *'yung* friendship *pero ayokong magsalita ng tapos. Hindi rin naman ako nagsasara ng pinto. Pero alam din naman ni* Oyo *na* at the moment, *di pa rin talaga ako* ready to commit *at pumasok na naman sa isang* relationship. *Hindi pa, at mukhang matatagalan pa.*" (In short, yes and no?)

JOMARI Yllana

Lowered expectations

•Carlene Aguilar on Dennis Trillo's media statements about the controversy involving Cristine Reyes:

"*Mag-sorry na lang siya kasi meron siyang mga hindi sinabing totoo. Doon medyo hindi ko nagustuhan.*" (*Ano raw?*)



JOHN Prats

•Carlene's message to Dennis:

"*Hindi ko naman siya iniisip eh. Bahala siya sa buhay niya. Basta maging okay siyang* dad, *okay na 'yun sa akin.*" (*Ah, ito malinaw.*)

•Sen. Bong Revilla and wife Lani Mercado on not saying "I love you" to each other in a recent episode of an afternoon talk show:

Lani: "*Alam na niya kung bakit. Hindi na dapat niyang i-*explain." (Afraid.)

Bong: "*Hindi ko alam 'yun.*" (Let's ask...)

Crossed fingers

•Angelika dela Cruz on her alleged return to GMA 7 as a contract star:

"I hope so. I really, really hope so. And, *malalaman din po natin yan. Siguro bigyan mo lang ako ng isa o dalawang lingo para sagutin ng dire-diretso ang mga tanong mo.* Well, honestly *hanggang ngayon po wala pa naman po akong napipirmahang kontrata so hintayin na lang po natin kung ano po ang mangyayari. May* offer *na po talaga pero mahirap eh. Mahirap po magsalita. Ayusin pa po natin yung mga dapat ayusin bago tayo magbigay ng* final *na salita po.*" (In short *nga, wala.*)

•Vandolph Quizon on his marriage to girlfriend Jenny Salimao:

"*Maraming nagsasabi bata pa tayo para pasukan ang bagay na ito.* It's better to start early."

•Jenny on her marriage to Vandolph:

"*Magsisimula pa rin tayo kaya pang-matagalan talaga.*" (Again, again, again?)

Match up, match down

•Jomari Yllana on wooing Pops Fernandez:

"I can say I met my match in her. *Hanggang ngayon pa rin naman kinikilala pa rin kita.* And, *hanggang ngayon eh parang nililigawan pa rin kita.* It's been two years *na, nililigawan pa rin kita. Alam ko marami pa akong hindi nalalaman tungkol sa kanya and pilit kong inaalam pa rin ngayon.* It's very nice." (Confused *kami*, as usual.)

•Jomari, directly to Pops: "Pipay, *mahal kita, dahil wala kang katulad.*" (Great reason.)

•Pops to Jomari:

"*[Mahal kita] dahil iniintindi mo ang bawa't* need ko *at naiintindihan mo siya at, higit sa lahat, inaalagaan mo rin 'yung mga anak ko.*" (*Nagluluto rin kaya siya?*)

•John Prats on reports he and Shaina Magdayao have been romantically linked for four months now:

"*Nakakatawa 'yung* part *na 'yun kasi, nagsabi na* four months *na kami. 'Yun pa lang ang kaka-amin ko lang na* I like her. *Etong ligaw sa kanya eh bahay.*" (Channeling Jomari?)

•Shaina on being courted by John:

"We're enjoying each other's company. [I'll say yes to him] *siguro pag* ready *na ako. Kapag hindi siya makaka-sagabal sa* work *ko.*" (*Siya*, meaning, *si* John or a romance?)

Love-hate routine

•Alfie Lorenzo on his alleged rift with Lolit Solis over the libel case filed by Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby:

"*Eh dati naman kami* love-hate *ni* Lolita. *At saka 'yung iba kasi sine-seryoso nila. Akala inaaway ko talaga si* Lolita, *hindi.* Let's treat that *na parang matandang kapatid ako ni* Lolita *na pinapagalitan siya.*" (Got that—Lolita *pala siya.*)

•Lolit, on Alfie's alleged provocation on a radio show:

"*Wala naman dapat ayusin eh. Nung nagsalita si* Alfie, *di ko kinonsider 'yun na away. Nung nagsasalita siya*, [I took it] *lang na parang tampong kapatid. Gano'n.*" (It does help to keep every single ally.)

•Alfie, on who sides with whom in the libel case:

"*Kung ano man ang laban ni* Lolita *siyempre nandoon kami. Ganyan 'yung mga* reporters, *eh, parang mga* Chinese *'yan eh. Kung mga* Chinese *nag-aaway-away* among themselves, *pag may umaway na* outsider, *nagkakampihan 'yan. Siguro alam ng nagdedemanda kay* Lolita, *kung may kakampi siya o wala. Eh siguro, pagdating ng talagang giyera, alam nila kung sino'ng sasama sa kudeta.*" (Somehow, we got that, too.)

Hate-love variation

•Ryan Agoncillo, on making "peace" with Piolo Pascual:

"*Walang matang nakatingin. Walang tengang nakikinig.* And it was, *kumbaga, 'yung sinabi namin sa isa't-isa, napakaganda. Buti na lang 'yung mga* press people in our recent press con, when we actually said *na wala na kaming gustong sabihin*, they respected it. I appreciate that so much. And *para sa aming tatlo, 'yung napag-usapan, sa aming tatlo na lang 'yun* and it was a very beautiful feeling. *Pagkatapos, nu'ng pauwi na kami, magaan yung pakiramdam. 'Di magandang may kaaway, eh, kahit sino pa 'yan lalo na kaibigan mo.*"

•Judy Ann Santos on the apparent settlement:

"*Ako, sa lahat ng* fans *na naghihintay nito, salamat po dahil nakapag-hintay kayo. Sa mga taong maraming nasabi noon sa amin,* opinion *n'yo yan, nirerespeto ko sila pero sana respetuhin din nila 'yung* fact *na eto po 'yung gusto naming mangyari. Ayaw naming pag-usapan, maganda masyado 'yung nangyari. Ayaw po naming masira.*" (*'Pag maganda masyado, di kami kasali?*)

(Thanks to Star Talk, Showbiz Central and The Buzz.)

A VERY PREGNANT actress/singer Jennifer Lopez, with her husband, actor/singer Marc Anthony, at "Movies Rock," a celebration of music in film, Sunday at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood. AFP

SHANG CINEPLEX
① GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB: GP
② ENCHANTED MTRCB: GP
③ HITMAN (MTRCB: R-13) / BEOWULF (MTRCB: PG-13)
④ THE KINGDOM MTRCB: R-13
PREMIERE THEATRE — GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB: GP
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Anti-Christ?

CHOOSING UP SIDES IN 'THE GOLDEN COMPASS' CONTROVERSY

"THE GOLDEN COMPASS" stars: Daniel Craig and Nicole Kidman.

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 1 (UPI) -- Some U.S. Christians are campaigning against the new film, "THE GOLDEN COMPASS", as anti-religious but the movie also has fans in the religious community who thinks the opposite.

The CON's:

"*Pullman has been an outspoken critic of abusive organized religion*", The Atlanta Journal Constitution reported last Saturday.

The film reportedly softens some of the anti-religious elements of the books, but **Patrick Thompson** of the **Georgia Baptist Convention** told the newspaper the story contains "*an anti-God and anti-religious message built around children.*"

Of course, you just know comments like these aren't going to stop a tidal wave of outrage from conservative magpies, and the **Sydney Morning Herald** quotes what's sure to be an early harbinger of the response from some quarters: "*Clergymen who kidnap children. Witches who aren't wicked. Even a pair of sexually ambiguous angels. If you thought Harry Potter was blasphemous, wait till you get a look at [this] trilogy,*" wrote one film critic last week.

William Donohue with the U.S.-based **Catholic League** distributed an e-mail warning of the "agenda" of the "His Dark Materials" trilogy, which "The Golden Compass" is based, "*to bash Christianity and promote atheism*", the Los Angeles Times reported last Sunday.

The Colorado-based **Focus on the Family** said Pullman's work was "*blasphemous and heretical*".

The PRO's:

But many movie fans from around the world, as well as from various religious communities and film critics believe otherwise.

"*Many British Christians see Pullman's contribution as healthy, noting the difference between retail theology and debates over morality and humanity's world purpose*", the Times said.

Some church leaders also embrace Pullman's skepticism as necessary for the evolution of Christian thought.

His Eminence the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams says: "*Pullman's portrayal of the "Church" in the story amounts to an attack on dogmatism and the use of religion to oppress, not on CHRISTIANITY itself. I proposed that THE GOLDEN COMPASS be taught as part of religious education in schools.*"

In the U.S., **Donna Freitas**, a religion professor at St. Michael's College in Vermont, hailed Pullman's trilogy as a "*religious classic*" bringing Christian theology closer to a divinity "*fit for our age.*" She thought the books were "*the most magnificent work of theology*" she had read.

ADVT. *–United Press International*

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2ND WEEK
FROM THE PRODUCER MICHAEL MANN
AND DIRECTOR PETER BERG
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JENNIFER GARNER
ACADEMY AWARD WINNER
CHRIS COOPER
HOW DO YOU STOP AN ENEMY WHO ISN'T AFRAID TO DIE?
MTRCB RATING R-13
STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

Reader warns parents vs both book and film

FEEDBACK

From Ferdy R. Valdivia (ferdyrv@yahoo.com), as sent to the Readers' Advocate:

THERE is reason to be concerned about the movie "The Golden Compass." I believe, as a parent myself, that there is an urgent need to inform other parents of its probable impact on children.

First of all , it's not a simple fairy tale. It is capable of undermining children's faith in God. It is being promoted as a "fantasy" film in the tradition of "The Lord of the Rings," "Narnia," and the "Harry Potter" series.

"The Golden Compass" is the first (original title: "Northern Lights") in a trilogy of novels by Philip Pullman. The second book is "The Subtle Knife," and the third is "The Amber Spyglass." Together, the trilogy is known as "His Dark Materials," actually a phrase from John Milton's "Paradise Lost."

Pullman attacks the Catholic Church and Judaism, and promotes atheism. He exposes children to evil in the guise of a "multiple universe." A supporting character, Dr. Mary Malone, is a former Catholic nun who abandoned her vocation. She resurfaces in the second book and again in the third, by which time she invites the two lead characters, a boy and a girl, both 12 years old, to engage in occult practices.

Also, Pullman refers to God as "The Authority" and portrays him as a mere angel and a liar at that. In the third book, The Authority is senile and locked in some sort of jewel, held prisoner by the patriarch Enoch, who rules in The Authority's name. When the 12-year-olds discover the jewel and release the Authority, he disintegrates and dies.

The whole story revolves around a rebellion against the Church, which turns into a rebellion against God. This leads to the "discovery" that God and Christianity are anything but true.

The trilogy suggests there is no immortal soul, no heaven or hell. Instead, it says, what awaits us is a "gloomy, Hades-type afterlife where the soul goes to wait until it completely dissolves."

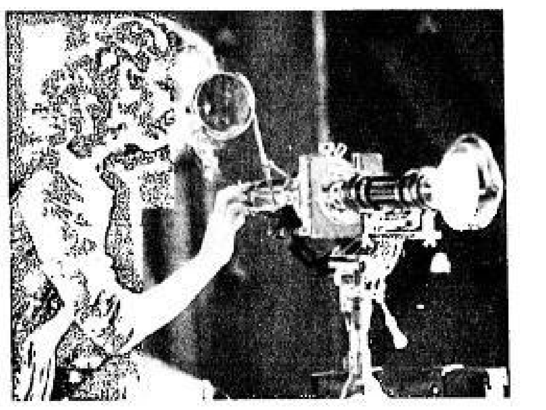
Let me quote a Catholic author: "There's a great deal of cruelty and gore in the books, not just battles but deliberate murder, sadism, mutilation, suicide, euthanasia and even cannibalism. There are also passages of disturbing sensuality and homosexual angels who are 'platonic lovers.'"

Parents, this book and/or movie will serve as spiritual poison. Watching it will endanger the spiritual foundation that has been inculcated in our children's minds and hearts. Let's inform more parents and pray that the film fails in the box office. This will definitely discourage the filming of the second and third books.

OPENING THIS WEEK

"BATANES"

"NARS"


"THE GOLDEN Compass"

"EASTERN Promises"

Batanes

Stars Iza Calzado, Ken Chu, Joem Basco, Bembol Roco, Daria Ramirez

Directed by Adolf Alix, Dave Hukom

According to directors Alix and Hukom, this drama recounts the love-hate relationship between a Manila girl (Calzado) and the sea that killed her Ivatan husband (Basco), but brought her a Taiwanese lover (Chu). Alix told INQUIRER Entertainment that Batanes island is a character in the movie. "Specifically, the ocean. Funny thing was, whenever we shot drama scenes, the waves were rough. But if it was a tender scene, the sea was calm."

Nars

Stars Jennylyn Mercado, Agot Isdiro, Coco Martin, Jaclyn Jose

Directed by Adolf Alix

Produced by nurse-entrepreneur Carl E. Balita, this drama chronicles the ups and downs of five friends with the same dream: To become nurses and work abroad. It's dubbed by drumbeaters as a "tribute to Filipino nurses." To prepare, Mercado immersed herself in the role. According to reports, she even read nursing reviewers. The cast emulated the way real-life nurses moved and wore their white uniforms. Opens Dec. 7.

The Golden Compass

Stars Nicole Kidman, Daniel Craig, Dakota Blue Richards, Eva Green

Directed by Chris Weitz

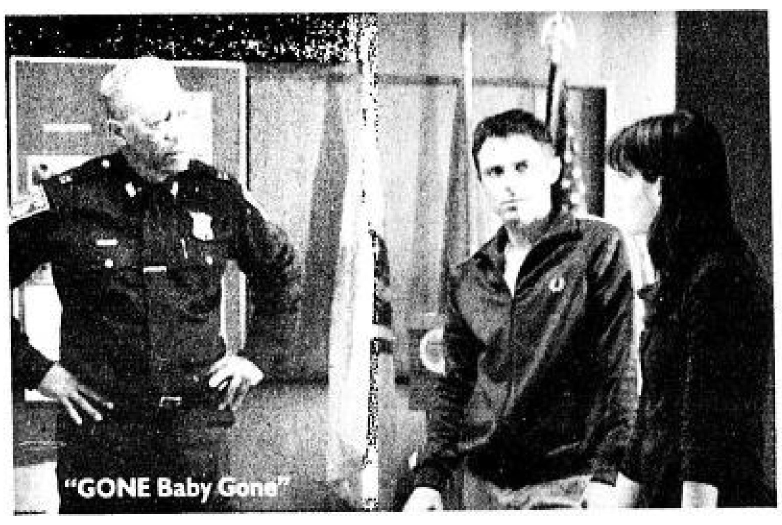
This fantasy-adventure is based on "Northern Lights"—the first book of the trilogy "His Dark Materials" by Phillip Pullman. Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter says: "The blend of live action, CG and visual effects is superb." Ron Henriques of CelebrityWonder.com raves: "[Child star] Richards is quite a find, an absolute treasure." Emanuel Levy of emanuellevy.com agrees: "Best asset is its heroine."

Gone Baby Gone

Stars Casey Affleck, Morgan Freeman, Ed Harris, Amy Ryan

Directed by Ben Affleck

Adapted from Denis Lehane's grim novel, this ethical drama centers on the kidnapping of a 4-year-old child. Peter Travers of Rolling Stone thinks that "Ben Affleck's first bat as filmmaker is more than promising; it's strikingly assured." Claudia Puig of USA Today agrees: "He takes pains to create a visceral sense of tension." Steven Rea of Philadelphia Inquirer notes: "[He] has made a tough, taut mystery."


"GONE Baby Gone"

Eastern Promises

Stars Viggo Mortensen, Naomi Watts, Vincent Cassel, Sinead Cusack

Directed by David Cronenberg

A midwife (Watts) plunges into the hellish world of London's Russian mafia, in search of the relatives of an addicted waif's newborn baby. Carina Chocano of Los Angeles Times asserts that this flick is "expertly realized and gun-metal slick." Owen Gleiberman of Entertainment Weekly points out that it "unpeels like an onion of corruption." J. Hoberman of Village Voice hails it as "rhapsodic … directed with formal intelligence."

Catacombs

Stars Shannyn Sossamon, Alecia "Pink" Moore, Cabral Ibaka, Cain Manoli

Directed by David Elliot, Tom Coker

Supposedly from the same team as "Saw," this thriller follows expat sisters (Sossamon and Moore) as they explore Paris' underground graves. Anthro Fred of Slasherpool.com rants: "There's barely any dialogue … the ending is just terrible." Michael Scrutchin of Flipside Movie Emporium describes it as "one sick movie." Focused Distortion reviewer complains: "A better cast could've helped this film a lot."

WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

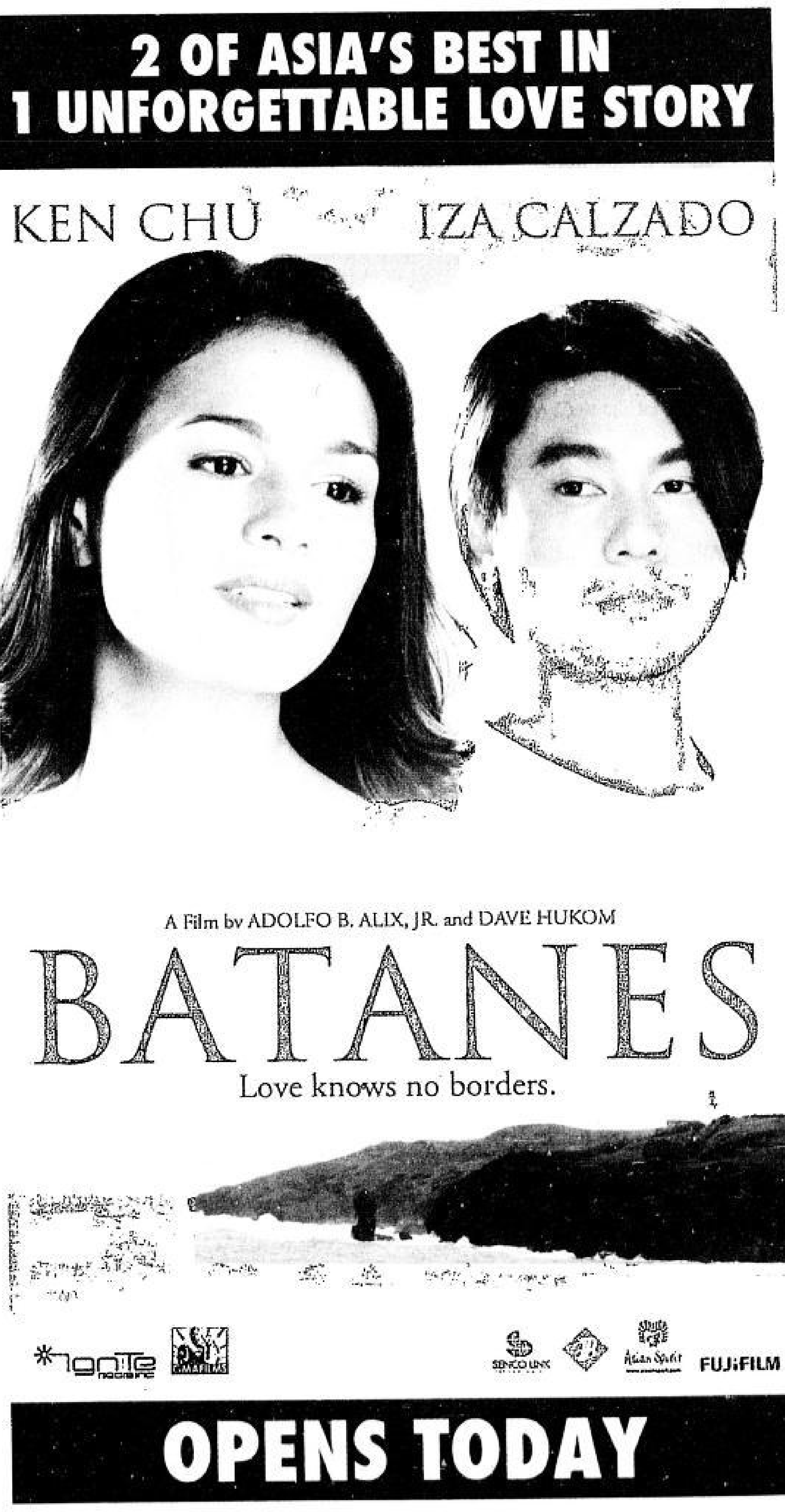
Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning November 30

Enchanted, Walt Disney Pictures

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	1	Enchanted	$ 17.0 mln	2
2	2	This Christmas	$ 8.4 mln	2
3	3	Beowulf	$ 7.9 mln	3
4	☆	Awake	$ 6.0 mln	1
5	4	Hitman	$ 5.8 mln	2
6	6	Fred Claus	$ 5.6 mln	4
7	7	August Rush	$ 5.1 mln	2
8	11	No Country for Old Men	$ 4.5 mln	4
9	5	Bee Movie	$ 4.5 mln	5
10	9	American Gangster	$ 4.3 mln	5

This Week, Last Week — Weeks in Release
☆ New release
Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday
REUTERS

"IN THE TRADITION OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS AND HARRY POTTER, THE GOLDEN COMPASS TAKES ITS PLACE AMONGST THE GREAT FANTASY FILMS OF ALL TIME."
~ Ben Lyons / E!
OPENS TODAY
FORCES WILL GATHER.
COURAGE WILL BE TESTED.
AND THE FIGHT FOR HUMANITY WILL BEGIN.
DANIEL CRAIG
NICOLE KIDMAN
THE GOLDEN COMPASS


2 OF ASIA'S BEST IN 1 UNFORGETTABLE LOVE STORY
KEN CHU
IZA CALZADO
A Film by ADOLFO B. ALIX, JR. and DAVE HUKOM
BATANES
Love knows no borders.
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